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The Setting

The Land and the People

FOR AT LEAST a thousand years the drama of empires rising, falling, expanding, and shrinking has been played out in an immense area of Africa at the southern edge of the Sahara known as the Sudan. These states, Ghana, Mali, Songhai, the Hausa kingdoms, Kanem-Bornu, Baghirmi, Wadai, Darfur, and others like them, from the upper Senegal River basin to the upper Nile, form a band from east to west across Africa. Their histories provide some of the most resplendent grandeur of Africa's past. Many of these states have now been consigned to the history books; Ghana and Mali have disappeared although modern countries have resuscitated their names; Songhai was destroyed by the Moroccans at the end of the sixteenth century; the Hausa states were altered as they came under the hegemony of the Fulani Empire of Sokoto at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and little is known as yet about the early states to the east of Lake Chad. On the other hand, Bornu in the northeastern corner of Nigeria has continued its sovereignty in the Chad Basin throughout a millennium of tribulations and triumphs and it goes on today organized as a separate emirate within Bornu Province.

Like most of the Sudan, Bornu is open savannah country, generally quite flat except for a few stable dunes covered with scrub in the north and several long low ridges running northwest to southeast in the southern part of the country. The ridges are probably ancient lake-shores of a great inland sea whose contemporary remnant is Lake Chad—a large shallow fresh water lake into which flow a number of rivers from the south and west. The soil is sandy and covered with scrub bush grass, and scattered trees, mostly thorny ones, except for the large spreading boabab, which dots the horizon here and there. In the 1930s the Nim, a hardy shade tree from India that thrives on the semi-desert conditions of northern Nigeria, was introduced to provide some forest preserves and year round shade in the villages. Here and there, especially at the bottom of the ridges, are large flat surfaces of hard clay that turn into gray-black mud during the rainy season. These provide clay for building materials and pottery, as well as water holes for the cattle of local villages and wandering nomads.

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Today the empire of Bornu is a Muslim emirate, or kingdom, which forms a subdivision of Bornu Province in the northeastern corner of Nigeria. The emirate covers an area of 24,000 square miles and, according to the 1952 census, has a population of about 1 million people of whom 626,000 are Kanuri—the dominant ethnic group of the kingdom. There are also about 160,000 Fulani and Shuwa who tend their cattle in the area and who carry out a semi-nomadic way of life. Another 225,000 people belong to small pagan groups, from south of the province and the Cameroons, as well as from the Hausa-speaking areas to the west and from the other regions of Nigeria. The emirate also includes about 5000 non-Nigerians, who are from Europe, America, the Near East, and other African countries.

Including the emirate, Bornu Province has approximately 1,600,000 people, 750,000 of whom are Kanuri. Thus many Kanuri live outside the political boundaries of the emirate. Indeed Kanuri can be found in all major cities of northern Nigeria in substantial numbers as well as in the neighboring territories of Chad and Niger. In order to identify the population with a particular territory, however, it is convenient to think of the emirate sub-division of Bornu Province as Bornu, the traditional homeland of the Kanuri kingdom. These are the people who are the subject of this book; they describe themselves as "Kanuri—the people of Bornu." As noted above, outside this entity—of Bornu—there are many other Kanuri, and a political entity, Bornu Province. However, these will be referred to by their full names, while the word "Bornu" will be reserved for the political system, whose present expression, the emirate or kingdom, is continuous with the Bornu of pre-colonial times. This reflects as well the attitude of the people themselves, who use the term "Bornu" to refer primarily to the emirate rather than the larger area of Bornu Province.

One other point should be kept in mind about the population figures. There has been a more recent Nigerian census since 1952, and although the details are unknown as yet, it is generally accepted that the more recent figures are in the neighborhood of thirty-five to forty-five percent higher than those of 1952. This means that Bornu may actually have nearly 900,000 in population, and Bornu Province may reach as high as two million persons, as of 1966.

The Kanuri of Bornu live spread out over the entire area of the emirate, in 306 named and variously sized settlements, ranging from Maiduguri, the capital, with its 80,000 population, down to tiny hamlets of three or four households. Most of the people, about two-thirds of them, live in 248 named village units that range in size from 1000 to 5000. About one-quarter of the population, on the other hand, live in eleven cities whose population is 10,000 or over. This statistical information from the census masks an important point, however, for the towns and villages are really area units and each has within its territory, a set of satellite hamlets that often total to more than half the population of the town or village area. It is this pattern that gives to Bornu its "filled-up" quality even though the population density is approximately twenty-five to forty persons per square mile when calculated from the 1952 census figures or perhaps as much as forty to sixty persons per square mile on the basis of more recent counts. Riding out on horseback into the bush one never feels alone; here and there sprinkled in one or two mile intervals in all directions are little hamlets with their surrounding farmlands while more intermittently, perhaps every five or six miles, are the larger towns and villages. Ev-

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Geidam in the north, where another anthropologist, Abraham Rosman, and his wife were working. Discussions with Dr. and Mrs. Rosman helped all of us to see many of the unique features of Kanuri life that stemmed from our particular towns as against more general Kanuri patterns of behavior that were widespread throughout the society. We also became acutely aware of the kinds of variations that could occur across communities as they varied in size, ethnic composition, and quality of the political leadership. At the end of the first field trip, my wife and I spent three months in the capital city of Maiduguri looking at government reports and district notebooks, and acquainting ourselves with many of the special activities that characterize courtly life at the center of the emirate.

In 1964 and again in 1965 I returned to Bornu. On my previous visit the country had been a colonial holding of Great Britain, now it was part of the independent nation of Nigeria. My task in this second visit was to gather statistics on marriage and on divorce rates. But it also gave me a chance to see old friends, and catch up on what had been happening locally since my last visit seven years earlier. Some changes were readily apparent. A large number of deep wells were sunk all over the province, and these now provide enough water for a greatly expanded livestock population. Everywhere the cattle are healthier, fatter, and above all much more in evidence. They block roads and are seen herded in large numbers to and fro wherever one wanders over the countryside. Furthermore the people are less afflicted by parasites because the deep water is uncontaminated, as much of it was not during my first visit. There is now a large modern abattoir and a ground-nut oil refinery in the capital city, and in late 1964 the Nigerian railway finally pushed through to Maiduguri to connect the Bornu capital with Nigeria's national railway system. On the other hand, detailed questions about various traditional practices indicated that there have been few changes at the cultural and social level. At the political level where there were English District Officers and other officials of the regional government, now these posts are filled by Nigerians, generally from other parts of northern Nigeria. However it is for the most part correct to use the present tense in describing Bornu, and when this is not true I will attempt to mention the special circumstances that have brought on the changes.

Magumeri, our home for seventeen months in 1956 and 1957, sits on top of one of the ridges of Bornu, and there is a steep climb onto it from the motor road that travels along the bottom of the ridge for most of the year. During the rains, the road runs along the sandy top of the ridge, to keep clear of the large muddy areas formed at the ridge bottom. Magumeri includes approximately 2000 people about half of whom live in surrounding hamlets within the boundaries of the village area. It is a district capital and thus has a two-room primary school, a court house, and the large compound of the district head who administers twenty-one village areas, containing 50,000 people, living in an area of approximately 850 square miles. The village has a weekly market on Sunday, and is divided up into a number of wards under the village area head who is also the political leader of its surrounding hamlets and officially the political subordinate of the district head. Except for the fact that it has a somewhat lower proportion of non-Kanuri compared to most others, Magumeri is a "typical" Bornu village in terms of its size, occupational ranges of the population, and influences it receives from the capital and the world beyond the emirate. Indeed this is why I chose to spend most of my time

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

173 Given the fact that very many of the Muslim peoples of West Africa have legends concerning their origins in the Near East and often more specifically in Yemen, we can, I believe, think of the local origin theory as a mythical genesis story that is part of a widespread cultural heritage of the Muslim people of West
174 Africa, likening it in this way to western stories about the Garden of Eden. On the other hand we do have "hard" linguistic evidence that the Kanuri people are related to peoples of the central Sahara northeast of Bornu. We also have very suggestive evidence from the geographic history that relates the people speaking these languages to one another and gives us grounds for positing immigration into the Chad basin and an increasing population density in the area. The exact details of this theory are matters for future research, but the major conclusion which places the origin of the Kanuri in the central Sahara seems to be a valid one.

At any rate, by the end of the first millennium A.D. the Muslim world outside the Sudan knew of the existence of Kanem, a sovereign state due south of Tripoli on the southern rim of the Sahara. Local traditions associated with the king lists (these have been collected periodically since 1850) assert that Islam came at least to the rulers of Kanem in the eleventh century. According to the traditions an eleventh-century Mai or king is supposed to have died in Egypt on his
175 way to Mecca. Certainly by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Kanem became a well-known state in the Islamic world. Trans-Saharan commerce was completely controlled, garrisons were built to protect the trade routes, and treaty relations were established with the Hafsid rulers of Tunis. In the mid-thirteenth century a travelers' house for Kanem pilgrims was constructed in Cairo so that they might have proper accommodation while on the long journey to Mecca via Egypt. At the other extreme of the Islamic world, in Spain, a poet from Kanem was renowned in the court of El Mansur (1190–1214 A.D.) in Seville for his praise songs of the Sultan. This was a great period of Islamic civilization and Kanem played its part in that florescence.

175 From the mid-thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth century a period of
648 dark ages befell the kingdom. This is sometimes referred to as "the time of troubles." The dynastic chronicles indicate this period by including a great many rulers all holding sway for very short periods. The kingdom seems to have become a tempestuous stage for civil wars within and continuous attack from without. A letter to Cairo from this period has turned up, sent by a Kanem ruler, asking that the Caliph of Egypt send word to Sudanese Arabs who were helping Wadai to the east of Kanem raid amongst the people of Kanem for slaves even though such actions are considered to be against the precepts of Islam, since one must not raid for slaves amongst other Muslim peoples.[4] The main source of trouble is supposed to have come from one particular group—the Bulala. These people were either an allied subordinate tribe or a clan whose leading lineage had split off from the Kanem royal line and had then grown in its independence and power until its leaders challenged the Kanem control of the kingdom.

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members of a lineage know exactly how they are related to all the other members of it, and together, they often form a corporate group, clan members may not be able to trace genealogical links with other clan members and often clansfolk are widely dispersed." See John Beattie, *Bunyoro: An African Kingdom* Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 3.

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[4] See R. H. Palmer, *Bornu, Sahara, and Sudan*, (London: John Murray, 1936), p. 195.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Finally in the late fourteenth century, a rebellious Bulala group east of Lake Chad upset the Magumi Sefuwa rulers of Kanem, who ultimately came to the southwest portion of the Chad basin to establish what later became the empire of Bornu.

The collapse of the great Kanem empire in the fourteenth century is attributed by tradition to internal civil wars resulting from the Bulala revolt against the Sefuwa dynasty. The ultimate cause is rationalized in legend by an alleged irreligious act of the seventeenth king or Mai of Kanem, one Dunama, (*ca.* 1220–1260 A.D.) who is supposed to have "laid the foundations for the ensuing disaster of the empire by opening the sacred talisman of Bornu" which subsequently provoked men of ambition to entreat against the state.[5] It may or may not be true, but it is very likely not the entire explanation even if we were to know what the "sacred talisman" was—which we do not; knowledge of its meaning and content have long since disappeared. Other reasons for the collapse of the kingdom besides that of a civil war against the Bulala can be suggested. The kingdom was in all likelihood not highly centralized and the nobles could quite easily unite, obtain outside help, and try to gain control. Indeed all of the traditions of the Bulala tell of them obtaining help from the Tubu of the central Sahara (a rebellious group who were tributary to Kanem) against the ruling Kanem dynasty.

Another factor is the nature of succession to the throne. Throughout the Sudan, and for as long as any traditions go back in Bornu, succession to the throne has always been open to those whose fathers have been monarchs. However, given many short reigns, this custom increases the number of contenders enormously and therefore exacerbates competition for royal office in the state so that the danger of civil wars and lack of unity is accelerated; the state is then much weakened as an effective political force. In other words, given a few short reigns, the possibility that more will follow becomes even greater unless a strong man with very strong backing emerges to quell the factions supporting various royal contenders. Finally it should be realized that Bornu was a much greener land than Kanem and it might have actually attracted the Kanem ruling group and their followers away from the drier, more inhospitable northern shores of Lake Chad. Certainly the kingdom of Kanem was not of such a nature that it suddenly collapsed when people (later to be called Kanuri) left. The Bulala clan assumed the leadership and Kanem continued as a sovereign state while the Kanuri tried, unsuccessfully at first, to reconquer their lost empire.

By the end of the fifteenth century the Sefuwa and their clan, the Magumi, had obtained sovereignty to the southwest of Lake Chad, and under a series of able monarchs they established their new kingdom of Bornu as a great power in the Sudan. The first of these rulers to organize and establish a really powerful state was a man named Ali Ghajedeni (*ca.* 1470–1500 A.D.), the forty-eighth monarch on the Sefuwa dynastic list. He built a new capital called Birni Ngazargamo, "the walled fortress," at the north end of Bornu and united this new kingdom under his control. Ali is supposed to have reconquered Kanem and re-established control over the Saharan trade while making war continually against Songhai to the west over the subjugation of the Hausa states and the east-west trade routes across the Sudan. His reign was followed by a series of others no less nota-

[5] H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, Vol. II, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1857), p. 637.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

ble, and these men maintained Bornu at an apogee of greatness until well into the seventeenth century. One of these rulers, Idris Alooma, had a court scribe at the beginning of the seventeenth century, who wrote a number of accounts of his royal master's military expeditions. Luckily these have survived to give us a picture of Bornu warfare and government in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It was during this period, too, that Bornu was first mentioned on European maps, and from this time forward its fame became part of the legends of unknown kingdoms that lay inside the unexplored interior of Africa.

Bornu traditions claim that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a decline in the power of the state. This is explained by the claim that the monarchy was becoming weak and overburdened with pomp, rituals, and religious study by the monarch. The ruling Mai appeared in public in a *fanadir*, or cage, which only his most trusted servants could approach and rarely led military expeditions himself. Much of this may be a reinterpretation of Bornu history by the second dynasty and their followers, who would naturally have played up the failures of the previous regime, when they took over in the nineteenth century. Contrarily there are traditions of many successful military campaigns during this period and Bornu's reputation as a great kingdom was still very widespread. Thus a wandering Englishman, Richard Tulley, who visited Tripoli at the end of the eighteenth century, spoke glowingly of what he had heard of Bornu's power. Parenthetically, he claimed that one of the Kanuri noblewomen living in Tripoli could speak the Italian language fluently.[6] On the other side of the case, Tuareg and Tubu raiders attacked the northern boundaries of Bornu and harassed the caravans with greater intensity than before.

The activities of these raiders are said to have increased during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but it is important to realize that the entire southern Sahara was a hotbed of unrest during this two hundred year period. In the 1590s the armies of El Mansur of Morocco finally managed to cross the Sahara and destroy the great empire of Songhai. Its cities of Timbuctu and Gau never again became the great emporia of trade, politics, and learning they had once been. The Moroccans could not establish, so far from home, any stable administrative organization capable of replacing the one they had destroyed. This suddenly released vassal groups in the Sahara, many of whom bordered on Bornu, and these were now free to raid, stimulate revolts, and pillage caravans, while their cousins to the west fought over the remains of the Songhai empire and the control of western trade routes across the Sahara. It was during this same period of unrest that, all across the Sudan, wandering holy men, especially nomadic Fulani of Futa Djallon in Guinea, in Masina in the Upper Niger, and even in present day Nigeria, were expressing this disorder in religious terms. They preached through their leaders for a return to a truer and purer form of Islam. Often they claimed that those round them were pagans and had to be subdued in a holy war to reestablish Muslim order and law. It is in the light of all this turbulence that the so-called decline of Bornu in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries should be seen. Elsewhere empires were tottered or being formed, as in Futa Djallon; but Bornu remained, shaken perhaps by the general unrest of the period but still it survived, controlled its trade routes,

[6] R. Tulley, *Letters Written During a Ten Years' Residence at the Court of Tripoli*, Vol. II, (London: 1819), p. 51.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

ruled its territory, and attempted to keep the peace with its neighbors and tributary states.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the area of what is now Northern Nigeria was rocked by the Fulani wars under a religious leader, Othman dan Fodio, who proclaimed a *Jihad* or holy war. Ultimately these developments resulted in the founding of the empire of Sokoto. In Bornu the local Fulani organized an attack on the Kanuri kingdom, not so much to support the Sokoto Empire, as to take advantage of it and set up principalities of their own. By 1808, the Fulani in Bornu constituted a dangerous threat. Indeed they had succeeded in attacking, defeating and sacking the ancient capital of Bornu, Birni Ngazargamo. When this happened the ruler and his followers fled towards Lake Chad and were not able to return to the city until some unexpected aid from Kanem enabled them to deliver a powerful defeat to the Fulani forces some six weeks after they had abandoned the capital. A few years later in the winter of 1811–1812 another Fulani force attacked and pillaged the capital. Again the Kanuri were helped by this same Kanembu chief or Shehu who defeated the Fulani and sent them fleeing westward to the borders of Bornu.

However, this aid was to change the entire history of the empire. From 1812 onwards the traditional Bornu government lost its control of the state. The Shehu, Mohammed el Aminu, El Kanemi, or Shehu Laminu as he is remembered locally, had the only effective armed force in the Bornu kingdom, and he used this to control sporadic Fulani uprisings that continued until at least the 1820s. Both the traditional government and the Shehu moved away from the western and northern boundaries and set up in adjacent towns near the west shore of Lake Chad. People soon realized that the Shehu held power in the state and flocked to his town, while that of the old Magumi Sefuwa monarch became a small redoubt for those still loyal to the ancient dynasty. The former leaders still retained the royal title, held court, and collected or were given some of the state revenues. When they intrigued against Shehu Laminu, he simply deposed them. At the same time he made bargains with rival claimants to the old throne so that any changes in the royal office, made under his direction, would be to his own advantage. Meanwhile the ancient rulers came more and more to be simply ceremonial puppets in the hands of the real ruler of Bornu, Shehu Laminu.

Yet Laminu never asserted ultimate control over the kingdom. Even after he had built a new capital, at Kuka, for himself and his dependents, the small village of Birni nearby was maintained for the ancient monarchy. Across the entire Sudan and beyond, however, he was recognized as the real ruler of Bornu. He was the leader of its administration and his political, military, and judicial sagacity were and still are lauded in praise songs that match these secular skills with his supernatural powers. Indeed his fame spread to Europe as well. This resulted from the writings of Denham and Clapperton, who crossed the desert in the 1820s and remained for an extended period in Bornu learning about its people and of the double regency under Shehu Laminu's control. Laminu died in 1835 and it was not until a decade later in 1845 or 1846 that his son, Omar, finally did away with the last remaining members of the Sefuwa dynasty proclaiming himself and his royal heirs to be the only rulers of Bornu. This was the occasion for the formal inception of Bornu's second dynasty whose descendants are the ruling family in the kingdom at the pres-

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ent time. It was during Shehu Omar's reign that Barth, the famous African explorer, visited Bornu and obtained the first written account of its history.

The descendants of Shehu Laminu ruled throughout the rest of the nineteenth century without undue excitement. There were always succession problems indicated by struggles for the throne among possible heirs and during the 1850s there was even a revolt in which a prince of the realm overturned his older brother for a few months until the deposed monarch was able to gather his forces and recapture the government. But such events had always been the common currency of Bornu's history.

Later in the century, however, a tragedy befell the kingdom. A marauding brigand of the Sudan who had gathered around himself an army of well-disciplined and trained soldiers slashed his way westward across Africa conquering and pillaging as he went. In 1893 he crossed over into Bornu and demolished the capital, defeating the Bornu army and sending the Shehu with some of his followers fleeing to the north and west of Bornu. This man, Rabeh, is still remembered today in Bornu for the tyrannical hold he attempted to establish and for the plundering and sacking of many Bornu villages which he carried out while subduing the state. Eventually he built himself a capital in southeast Bornu and married his daughter to the son of the Emir of Sokoto. Rabeh provides some interesting grounds for speculation. For had colonial expansion into the area not conflicted with Rabeh's own plans, he might very likely have founded Bornu's third dynasty. As it was Britain, France, and Germany were carving up West Africa for themselves.

The French arrived first and soon found themselves at war with Rabeh. Eventually he was defeated and killed, and although his sons attempted to keep control of their father's new found kingdom, it was a futile gesture in the face of French arms. By 1902 the British had taken over what is now Bornu province in northeastern Nigeria; the Germans obtained the Cameroons—containing Rabeh's old capital, and the French set up their headquarters at Fort Lamy in what is now Chad. The old Kanembu Shehu was put on the throne again by the French at Dikwa (Rabeh's capital) and was then maintained by the Germans. In the scramble over territory that characterized this period, the British persuaded the Shehu to return to Nigerian territory, where they have been ever since as rulers of Bornu.

The British first brought the Shehu to Kuka, the nineteenth-century capital of the Kanembu Shehus, which they had promised to rebuild for him as part of the bargain for his return. They set up their own headquarters in the village of Magumeri and tried to administer the state from these two centers. The job of administration from Magumeri proved impossible, as did the prospect of rebuilding Kuka; it had been sacked and demolished during the Rabeh period. In 1905 the colonial government decided to set up a new capital at Maiduguri in southern Bornu which would serve as a center for both the emirate and the Province of Bornu. Today it still serves both these functions and is the major urban center of the area.

The British also reorganized the political structure of the state, and geared it into the wider colonial government they were evolving for Northern Nigeria as a whole under the leadership of Lord Lugard. Under Lugard's direction they also stopped the trans-Saharan trade, especially in slaves, and oriented Bornu's economy southwards towards the Guinea Coast and the rest of Nigeria. In 1914 they quietly, and with practically no incident, took over the Northern Cameroons from the Ger-

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mans and ruled it after World War I as a League of Nations Trust Territory, (later a U.N. Trust Territory) which meant in practice that it was part of the administrative responsibility of the colonial officials in Northern Nigeria. To appreciate more clearly what changes were brought about by colonialism, however, it is necessary to understand something of the social, economic, and in particular the political structure of Bornu, as it developed during pre-colonial times, and it is to this task that the remainder of the chapter is devoted.

Kanem-Bornu: The Social and Political Background

Only the sketchiest oddments of information are available about the nature of Kanem society. One Arabic record speaks of its capital as a city of tents, and traditions tell of a "Council of Nobles" that had a great deal of power over decision-making by the king, or Mai as he was called. From this and a few other data, such as the emphasis placed on the clan membership of persons mentioned in the early periods of the dynastic lists, we can attempt a reconstruction that fits the facts. The early kingdom seems to have been made up of patrilineal, named clans under senior or noble lineages (also named) whose heads formed the so-called "Council of Nobles" under the king or Mai. The Mai himself was head of the senior lineage of a senior clan considered to be the most important or powerful in the region. In all probability the term "Mai" or "king" was used for all leaders of clans just as it is today among some of the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the Sahara to the north of Lake Chad who are closely related to the Kanuri. It also appears that the great Kanuri king lists are just what local people say they are—lists of the leaders of the Magumi Sefuwa or Sefuwa lineage heads of the Magumi clan. People in the clan considered themselves related by ties of descent to a common ancestor; but they could not describe the exact link with him, while they could describe the genealogical ties through men that made them all Sefuwa. Very probably these people utilized both cattle and domesticated plants although their early city of tents, referred to by Arabic historians, also suggests a greater emphasis on nomadism and the use of cattle. This is consistent with the clan organization described above; indeed this form of organization is widespread among nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples in the Sahara, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia. Later, as attested by the ruins at Garamoulé northwest of Lake Chad they probably built more permanent settlements and very likely used slaves from the south of Lake Chad as trade goods and as agricultural laborers.

How centralized and developed the early stages of the Kanem state really were is an intriguing and difficult question and one that can be solved only by extensive historical and archaeological research. Certainly concepts of statecraft from Islamic areas to the north of the desert and trips by Kanem monarchs to Mecca would have acquainted the rulers with the ideas of very highly centralized states. How much this actually affected Bornu is unknown, although it is possible that tensions over the power of the central monarch were another reason for the civil strife which led eventually to the migration of the Sefuwa from Kanem to Bornu.

After the Sefuwa set up their kingdom in Bornu the state became a much more highly organized and centrally controlled political system. The people who

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175 642 came to Bornu—and who also came to be called Kanuri about this time—were the Sefuwa, their fellow Magumi clansmen and loyal followers, clients and slaves. The traditions declare that the leader who finally founded the new capital of Birni Ngazargamo curbed the power of his own nobles and insisted that all of them (except one who protected the western boundaries) should live in the capital, leaving subordinates to administer their fief-holdings.[7] It should also be remembered that 175 this newly formed Bornu kingdom (*ca.* 1450–1550 A.D.) tried to regain control over 642 Kanem and many of its other lost vassal territories in the Chad Basin and the • 648 southern desert. Thus they very quickly attacked and defeated Bilma 400 miles to the north of Lake Chad which was the center for the Saharan salt trade. They also had to defend the kingdom against raiding desert Tuareg and the rising power of Songhai in the west.

Kanem was a state organized around a confederacy of clans, with one clan and its leading lineage having a senior status. The migration of this leading group into Bornu helps to explain why the Bornu kingdom was more centralized than its 175 predecessor as a political system. In Bornu the Magumi Sefuwa had no other re- 64 lated clan or clan leaders to share power with; instead they were confronted by a group of pagan peoples spoken of under the general term of "So" in the traditions. Against these people they fought battles of conquest to establish their rule in the area and in the end absorbed many of them into a group known today as the Kanuri. It would have been much simpler to unify this one group under a leader who had no rival clan or clan leaders to cope with. Thus the new situation in Bornu 175 afforded both a stimulus and an opportunity for increased centralization of power 642 in the political organization of the Kanuri state. It is against this growing centralization in the hands of the ruling monarch of Bornu that the following account of its structure should be gauged, for it is not always easy to portray change and development while describing how a society is organized.

Pre-nineteenth Century Bornu

175 643 At the head of the early Bornu state was the Mai or king. This office was hereditary in the male line, and all men whose fathers had been monarchs were eli- gible for the succession. The Council of Nobles, and accounts vary as to who these 1846 were, chose the new monarch upon the death of the reigning one, although powerful rulers could obviously affect the choice. The royal office carried with it an aura of untouchability, remoteness, and sacredness. People referred to the Mai as "Master" using the term applied by slaves to their owners. People approached the royal cage in which the Mai was seated and prostrated themselves before the bars putting sand on their heads or going through the motions of doing so to indicate the humility and respect they felt in his presence.

175 644 Members of the royal family held titled offices. These included the monarch's own mother, his senior wife, and often a senior female relative, either a sister, half-sister, or more distant female relatives in the male line. The sons and

[7] A fief is a political unit within a state over which a superior has rights of tribute collection and political leadership (not necessarily exclusive rights) given to him by his or his ancestors' relationship to a monarch.

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tendency for these two titles to be passed on down the male line. Even in this latter case, however, the king could always choose those most likely to be totally loyal to his administration from among the heirs, or even disregard the hereditary rule if he wished and give the title to some other person. The four quadrant leaders also had their own fiefs which they used as the basic support for their large household organizations in the capital.

Vassal groups and territories paid tribute in kind through their leaders to the treasury of the Mai of Bornu. In the heyday of Bornu during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these vassals included a large number of surrounding peoples in what is now Northern Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. These subordinate groups were organized in two ways. In the first instance a Bornu consul was appointed to reside in the tributary state to help collect annual tributes and administer the government. This was in effect a kind of conquest and occupation used most often in adjacent and nearby territories. The second method was to leave the territory under the control of its own leaders after they had pledged their loyalty and their intention to pay tributes and give military support to Bornu whenever necessary; they were also expected to provide safety and hospitality to expeditions and caravans going to and from Bornu. Some of these vassal states were caught between two great powers. Such a case were the Hausa of northwestern Nigeria. Caught as they were between Songhai to the west and Bornu to the east they, therefore, paid tributes in two directions, always hoping that someday they could be relieved of these burdens by an increase in their own power or a decrease in the power of one or both of their overlords. Indeed Bornu traditions and written records are almost totally concerned with expeditions against reluctant tributaries who were remiss in the payment of their tributes. On the other hand, there are also accounts of tributary states sending to Bornu for help against external enemies and internal revolts; so the relationship could, and often did, work to the advantage of both the conqueror and the conquered.

The religious and legal life of the state was strongly influenced by the specialized religious practitioners who were steeped in the Koran and Islamic jurisprudence. The chief judge and religious leader of early Bornu was given the title of Talba and is referred to in traditions as "second to the king," or the next in authority to the monarch himself. He and his descendants and client followers knew the Arabic script and thus made up a literate group closely associated with political leaders as scribes, legal advisers and religious functionaries. These men sat in on judicial hearings and advised political leaders who adjudicated on the basis of their own knowledge of the law. Besides the Mai, most noble households kept such religious men within their compounds for similar purposes, and as instructors for the children. Under such conditions the religious leaders were also strong supporters of the state and its power structure.

Little is known of the details of taxation for the early Bornu kingdom although records are much better for the nineteenth century system. Obviously some form of tax was levied on local fiefs by fief-holders as well as by the monarch who also received tributes from vassal states and a major portion of booty from warfare. As we have already noted, it is fairly evident that royal taxation of the Bornu population itself was carried on through the efforts of the monarch's titled followers who held powers of royal taxation privilege in the four quadrants of the state.

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By the time the big lord living in the capital would have appointed several representatives to this particular fief because it had grown so big. Such fiefs were the ones most likely to fall prey to sub-division at the death of a king and appointment of a new one. For at this time the incoming monarch had to reward his chief supporters with grants of new fiefs.

As in the pre-nineteenth century the political hierarchy served as an appeal court system, and at the very top of the local fief hierarchy the junior lords shared adjudication with the most senior local leader whatever his rank. Usually these very senior political leaders of the fief had koranic scholars, or mallams, who gave legal advice. Serious cases such as homicide were referred immediately to the capital.

The other variety of fief, that based on birth into a particular group, or *jili* is less well understood. The word "jili" refers to variety or kind. The people speak of this or that jili of soil, or tree, or person. In using it to refer to a person they give his territorial or settlement background, or ethnic group, or his clan grouping if this differs from his territorial classification. Thus a person can have several jili —ethnic, territorial, or clan. Even patrilineal lineage affiliation can be described under this term. Nomadic groups in Bornu were represented as jili in the Shehu's court by a big lord of the jili (chima kura jilibe); this man was, in effect, the fief-holder responsible for the nomad group. Sometimes he was a leader of the group itself, and at other times he was a trusted Kanuri follower of the monarch. In both cases the big lord of the jili administered the group through his own representative in the group who was, unlike the territorial grouping, the local leader of a nomad clan, or a sub-tribe. Sometimes entire tribal groupings came under one jurisdiction, and at other times or in other sections of the state the tribe would be broken down into subsections based on clan groupings with one or more clans under a single fief-holder or big lord of the jili.

This double fief system allowed the nineteenth-century Bornu government the organizational means of administering both the settled and nomadic populations of Bornu. It also did something else very important, for it allowed the government effective control over the population even when natural disasters such as outbreaks of disease or sudden invasions sent the people into flight. If a large set of settlements had grown up in one territory from an original one, and this area was then beset by some disaster, which made the people flee in several directions, they were still thought of as a jili or a single variety of persons. They were still organized under their old lords, and their old leaders still retained over them some powers of taxation and demands of loyalty. If the entire kingdom was in an uproar —as it was during the Fulani wars at the beginning of the century with people fleeing in all directions—then old leaders, or former leaders, could muster their scattered followers as jili, and the political integration of the kingdom remained intact and viable until new settlements stabilized locally, and the territorial-based fief system could re-assert itself.

Complicating the system was the settlement of groups with fiefs through permission granted by the big lord in the capital. He could be approached by the leaders of a group of craftsmen, or kinsmen, or people of the same ethnic extraction, who requested of him that they be allowed to settle in one of his fiefs. In this case, the special group was directly under the jurisdiction of the lord through his local administrator, the junior lord, who dealt with their headman. In later generations,

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175 439 437 rope. From North African manufacturers came cloaks, shawls, red felt and embroidered hats for men, sashes, trousers, carpets, religious books, spices, perfumes, and later, cowrie shells. From the desert came tobacco, barley, wild rice, dates, salt, natron, camels, and various assorted medicines, especially *drupa,* a herb believed to induce fertility in women. In return Bornu sent back sewn cloth, hides, leatherwork, sandals, feathers, ivory, gum arabic, Korans, kola nuts, and, above all, slaves. Caravans were large, and the trip was long, arduous, and dangerous because of the desert and its marauding inhabitants. However, just how important foreign trade was in the area is difficult to assess. The ordinary man probably used very little of outside manufacture, but at the capital such goods were considered necessities for people having any pretentions to higher status in the kingdom.

The Colonial Change

175 648 Using this description of pre-colonial Bornu it is now possible to discuss the kind of changes that were brought into the area by the inception of British rule at the beginning of the twentieth century. The British came to Bornu in 1901, after it had been occupied for seven years by Rabeh who had been intent on making himself the founder of its third dynasty. The British had not only to bring Bornu 175 177 648 634 under the Northern Nigerian Government but to resuscitate its leaders who had not been in control of the area since 1893. At first they simply left the Shehu to do as he pleased, with the exception of waging war and carrying on the slave trade, which they vigorously put down. However, the idea of fiefs being ruled by lords at the capital seemed grossly inefficient, and they soon ordered that the Shehu choose his best fief-holders and that these be sent out to the locality of their fiefs to govern. Furthermore they decided to consolidate numbers of fiefs into larger units which they now called districts. There followed a tussle between the British and the Kanuri over how many village areas and how many districts there were going to be, the British generally trying to limit the number while the Shehu and his advisers generally tried to increase them. Finally a number around twenty was worked out for the districts and then village areas were incorporated into them. In general these village areas approximate the size and location of former fiefs. However the Kanuri felt that the head of a district was like a titled, local, territorial chief of the 175 177 648 632 634 nineteenth century who has control over a large number of settlements, so he was called *ajia,* which translates today as a district head. Under him were heads of village areas that included a number of satellite settlements—and this village area head was—like the *ajia,* appointed and turbaned by the Shehu. He was therefore called a lawan (village area head) as was the titled head of a settlement with satellites during the nineteenth century. The difference, however, was that now there was no fief-holder or his representative to whom the local headmen were accountable. The district head held his office directly under the Shehu and the village area heads were directly under the district head. Small wards and hamlets were now [622] headed up by bullama and the term for a bullama's subordinate, the mbarma, fell into disuse and has now almost disappeared.

175 177 648 634 The mode of appointing and maintaining these jobs led to problems which were never really solved. The Shehu put up names for the district heads who be-

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came a very powerful group of chiefs through whom the kingdom was administered. When these men went to their districts, sometimes they had precolonial ties in these areas as big lords—some of the constituent towns in the district were their former fiefs; sometimes however they were complete strangers to the area. Besides this there was a constant shuffling of different district heads through transfers, dismissals, retirements, and deaths. The various village area heads under each district head were chosen on the basis of investigations conducted by the British colonial officials to find out who among the population had the hereditary right to leadership for a particular local settlement and its satellite communities. Very often there was no tie of previous loyalty between the village area head and the new district head. Previously the problem had been solved by sending out a chima gana or junior lord who represented the fief-holder. He had lived in the fief and created a set of loyal local followers. At first district heads did the same things. They sent out their own representatives—now called chima—to run the village areas in their district for them. This practice was soon discovered by the British and as early as 1910 was declared illegal, although it continued on until well into the 1930s, and there are even some district heads today who admit they use chima to ensure control of their district. In Chapter 6 we will take up this problem again and examine it in more detail within the organization of the district.

The central government of the emirate has undergone a number of significant changes under colonialism. At first the Shehu collected taxes on settled peoples through the district heads and taxes on nomads through two trusted slave nobles. This proved unsatisfactory to the British who very early in the century changed the system so that each district head was responsible for tax collection on both settled and on nomad populations in his district. This weakened the power of the Shehu, but at the same time (*ca.* 1914) the British began enforcing among themselves the idea that they must deal with the Bornu government through the Shehu and his Council. Thus good or bad reports of the district heads or village area heads had to be officially put through the Shehu giving him a great deal of either protective or punitive power over his district and village chiefs.

After 1914 there was an increasing effort to create a working Council for the Shehu with a modern treasury from which local planning could be financed. Starting with only a few members it has grown slowly through the years to function as a cabinet with a Waziri or chief minister at its helm. Each councilor has a portfolio or Native Authority department, such as Education, Works, Agriculture, and so on, and these have central offices in the capital with representatives spread out in district capitals throughout Bornu. The experience in this twentieth-century emirate has produced Kanuri who now take part in regional and national politics so that men from Bornu sit in Kaduna, Lagos, London, and even at the United Nations in New York.

The movement of fief-holders out into the bush to administer districts produced a district capital where the ajia or district head resides. To this capital he brought his urban followers; and to the village as well came the district judge and his retinue. As the Native Authority departments developed, local representatives of the various civil service departments of the emirate government came out to the district capital as well. This makes the district capital a more complex and urbanized center and has forced the effects of such urbanization to spread widely

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throughout the emirate. Roads were built connecting the district capitals to Maiduguri, the major city of Bornu and to one another, and district capital markets came to be among the most active because of the increased population in the district capitals not producing their own goods.

In the economic sphere the colonial era sounded a death knell for the Saharan trade. A dribble of caravan trade still exists, but it was the express policy of the British to face Bornu around and turn its trade toward Nigeria and the Nigerian ports. Caravans were heavily taxed, and European trading companies were encouraged to move into Bornu and start circulating cash and cheap import goods. These few large English and French trading companies encouraged the appearance of a corps of Levantine traders who are ubiquitous in West Africa. They take credit from the large companies, giving it out again to large numbers of Africans who buy and sell for them. By the second world war ground-nuts were a well established cash crop, marketed through these companies although controlled by the government. When inflationary boom prices for ground-nuts hit Bornu after the war, the people were ready to take full advantage of it and there was a surge upwards of consumer buying, so that radios, bicycles, and many other industrial commodities became part of local life. On the other hand, judging by the surprise registered in the annual reports of the colonical officials, the government was a little stunned at first to know what to do with its increased revenues. However a host of new improvements began to be an accepted part of life in the public sector, just as new import items became common to the private sector. The most recent of such changes has already been mentioned in Chapter 1. After independence, the digging of deep wells increased the cattle population enormously and has provided a basis for further development in the area. This, then, is the Bornu background. It is a long and eventful one—and the people are proud of it. For an anthropologist, one of the most intriguing questions to ask is "why"—why has Bornu lasted so long in this area? Why has it adapted so well to modern times? It has absorbed Shehu Laminu's destruction of the Sefuwa dynasty, Rabeh's conquest, the colonial overlordship, and national independence in its calm stride. Its leaders and its people are remarkably stable—yet not enslaved by tradition. Indeed they strive to change and develop Bornu and their future is a bright and hopeful one. In the chapters to follow I hope to provide answers to these questions in order that we may ask them again after considering in more detail the quality of life in Bornu.

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they point to the major functions of the event. Certainly it marks publicly the opening of the gates on the road to manhood for the young man, but, much more importantly, it validates, strengthens and dramatizes the relational network of ties that the family and the household maintain and attempt to promote in the society.

At some of the larger ceremonies, especially those held by the high-ranking households in Bornu, there is often a small group of recent converts who ask to join the ceremony in order to mark their religious conversion and obtain full membership in Kanuri society. In one very large circumcision we saw forty-seven boys from high status households and ten Cameroon pagans ranging in age from fifteen to thirty-five. These latter seemed completely ecstatic to have been accepted at the ceremony and were the subject of much ribald joking by the Kanuri participants. However they now had an easier access to Kanuri women as wives and sweethearts, and it is conceivable that when they do in fact marry Kanuri women they and their descendants will eventually be absorbed into Kanuri society. Thus the circumcision ceremony is one of the important gateways into society for non-Moslems from the small tribes surrounding Bornu on its southern and southeastern borders.

As in many cultures around the world, the Kanuri themselves regard the circumcision ceremony as a mark of approaching manhood, and even though the boys are often quite young the ceremony still dramatizes their adult or approaching adult status. Thus after the boys have come out of confinement during which the cut heals, they are given whips which they brandish while chasing and threatening the young girls. The girls must "buy off" such treatment by giving the young boy a few pennies. This ritual was left unexplained by informants who answered questions about its meaning by saying, "We do this because it is our custom." However, it seems likely that it is a symbolic reference to the achievement of manhood or potential manhood. It symbolizes through ritual the cultural value of male dominance which the boys must now begin to practice as they prepare to join the ranks of adult men. The "buying off" of the beating by the little girls can be interpreted to reflect the flexibility of female submissiveness; a woman must behave submissively towards a man but she has levers to gain her own rights and wishes in her relationships with men.

Adolescence

As we have seen, there is an extra age-grade period for boys which lasts from around the time of circumcision to their first marriage between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. At first the young man is still thought of as a small boy, but as he advances into middle and late teenage years he becomes more of a *zairo*—that is to say, a young bachelor. He associates in his free time with other young men his age and begins to gossip about trade, politics, and nocturnal adventures with women. Young boys generally obtain their first sexual experience in their mid to late teenage period from divorced women who are often older than themselves. In their later teens and early twenties they begin to have more serious love affairs of longer duration with young divorced women who may turn out to be their future wives if their first marriages are not already arranged by their parents.

Sitting and listening to a group of these young men discussing matters of

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As in the example above there is a tendency for the district heads to appoint younger brothers to the post of lawan within their own districts. However this has its limits. In one case a lawan confidentially asked the British officials if he could be moved to a district away from the hegemony of his older brother, the district head. That same year (1935) there were a great many complaints by the peasants directed to British officials about the harshness of this particular district head's administration. He was warned but did not comply and was later dismissed. The younger brother sensed that trouble was brewing for the older brother and decided it would be more advantageous to his own career if he could move to another district and not get caught up in the difficulties his brother was creating by his lack of good administration. One district head remarked that he had tried to appoint his own brother in a previous district as lawan, but the young man had done a very bad job and it proved impossible for the district head to control him. The younger brother was finally deposed by the emirate government after his older brother was transferred to a new district. Later he came to his older brother in the latter's new district, hoping for another job as lawan in his brother's administration. However the older brother has no intention of doing so because, as he says, this younger brother is a bad man who oppresses his villagers when he gets a chance and this reflects back on the district head. Thus in Bornu the loyalty of brothers is ameliorated in the political system by the requirements of office.

As we have already noted, local representatives of the various Bornu Native Authority (emirate government) departments are stationed in the district capitals. These include people like the district chief scribe who keeps the books on revenue collection, the district judge, the school teachers, some native authority policemen, veterinary, forestry, and agricultural department representatives and so on. The list varies in length from district to district, but there is a general tendency for it to lengthen through time as the departments expand their programs and services. These officials are paid salaries and live in the district capital although they often get shifted from one district to another. Thus only one of these officials in Magumeri had been there for longer than four years and almost all of them had lived in at least three district capitals during the past ten years. They view themselves as a class apart from the local people; they are city bred or at least city educated; they share a common interest in state and national politics; and their mobility orients them to each other rather than to people outside the civil service. When asked who their best friends are they invariably mention other members of the emirate's civil service. Thus they form a class of urban cosmopolitans on the rural scene.

Their relations to the district head are complex and in some ways similar to that of the district head to his lawans when these latter are appointees of a previous district head. The native authority official is not necessarily a follower of the district head, and he does have a separate salary. Usually the official and the district head maintain a respectful but carefully measured social distance from one another. The local officials are often asked to eat at the compound of the district head which emphasizes their common urban upper-class membership and separateness as a group from the rural population. However, they generally do not become members of the district head's following. They have their own careers to follow, and though friendship with the district head is useful, it could also impede their success because of demands made upon them by the district head which might conflict with those of their own departmental superiors in the capital.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

On the other hand the local official must work through the district head if he wishes to carry out his job successfully. Children are ordered into the district school through the district head's office. Forestry reserves are set up by his directive; cattle are rounded up by him. Indeed almost any action involving a response by the people in the district must come originally from the district head. A lawan, if approached for cooperation by civil service employees, would generally refuse to cooperate if he had not been first notified by the district head's office. The district head is a high official of the state while the native authority employee is generally the lowest status field representative of his department. Thus they pay the district head respect, stand up when he approaches them, take off their shoes before entering his compound, and consult him on programs they wish to have carried out in his district.

On his part the district head quickly establishes who the native authority officials are, and what families they come from or are connected to in the emirate. If the district head is closely connected by friendship and political alliance to a high-placed official in the local representative's department, then he may have an avenue of control over this local person through the latter's own superior. On the other hand the native authority employee may be connected with the powerful people in the emirate and the district head then knows that this particular official could possibly bring powerful forces into action if a situation warranted it.

The relationships of the district head to the capital are highly complex and result from the fact that he is the official link between the central government of the emirate and the local political organization of the district. Officially he is responsible to only one body, the central agency of the emirate government which is the Shehu-in-Council. This council, called the Bornu Native Authority Council, under the chairmanship of the Waziri or chief minister, is the highest authority in the emirate. As we noted in Chapter 2, the council acts like a cabinet and each member has a Native Authority department under his direction. District heads receive instructions about policy from the council and directives about programs from each of the departments. The district head delivers taxes to the Native Authority Treasury and must account for his actions to the council which has a major voice in appointing, dismissing, retiring, and transferring district heads from high to low-paying districts or vice versa.

Both during the colonial period and at the present, the Bornu Provincial Government has had several emirates under its jurisdiction, of which Bornu is the largest. Although not officially responsible to the Provincial Government, the district head and his work have always been inspected periodically by touring officers of the Provincial Government. These men can make recommendations which influence the emirate government and during colonial times there are a number of records of district heads being retired or dismissed because of the "advice" of Provincial Government officials. Thus the district head has to be sure his actions are in line with the demands and standards of provincial officials who are today generally from other parts of Northern Nigeria, and were, up to a few years ago, the British colonial officers.

The district head has other links with the capital as well. As we have already noted, he keeps a household in the palace ward of the capital city, and his followers in his compound under a wakil, or chief follower, visit the palace regu-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

643 bodied in his title, "commander of the faithful," and is expressed ritually in a number of ways. Thus at the feast celebrating the end of Ramadan (the annual Muslim fast), a special ram of the Shehu is killed by the chief religious leader of the state. No one considering himself a citizen of the emirate and a subject of the Shehu is supposed to kill his own ram for the feast day until the royal ceremony is completed.

643 644 At all annual festivals and state occasions, and every Friday to a lesser extent, the Shehu is attended at his palace by his court and representatives of the people. The court includes members of the royal family, title holders, the Native Authority council members, and any district heads who may be in the capital or their city representatives who sit outside the royal courtroom. Into the royal presence come representatives of each Native Authority department, representatives of the religious leaders of the community, a sample of school children, leaders and representatives of the various occupational groupings under their own headmen. Each group gives symbolic pledges of loyalty and obedience to the throne by saying prayers for the health and welfare of the monarch and the state. The people, including the nobles, go down on their knees to the monarch, stand when he stands, remove their shoes in his presence, and speak to him only indirectly using terms of reverence and respect.

64 It is difficult to assess what real power the Shehu has in the emirate government. The present incumbent is a very old man, and for the last decade or so the bulk of administrative affairs have been handled by the Native Authority Council under the direction of the Waziri. Whether this now indicates a trend toward constitutional monarchy or whether a new, younger and more vigorous Shehu would reassert the power of the throne is a question that is fascinating but at present not capable of being answered. Certainly the Native Authority Council and the various departments under the council are new and growing powers in the contemporary society, but the district heads are formally responsible to the Shehu. Since the district heads are still very powerful members of the political system, a new Shehu could conceivably affect policy and the administration of the emirate very considerably through his influence on these men and their appointments. It is also very possible that he would influence the Native Authority Council itself and appointments to that body. Potentially the office is a very powerful one, and it seems unlikely that its power will diminish in future since the instruments of power are available to anyone occupying the throne who wishes to use them.

647 [631] [648] The main business of government of the emirate is handled on a day-to-day basis in the Native Authority departments, which are coordinated with similar departments in other emirates of the province under the Bornu Provincial Government which in its turn looks to the Regional Government of Northern Nigeria for policy directives that are regional in scope.

647 463 929 [565] [1017] The personnel of the Native Authority departments form what has come to be called a new class in the society. They are salaried bureaucrats who work in offices and generally have some form of western education. They wear wrist watches, read English and vernacular newspapers, listen to the radio for both local, national, and international news, go to political meetings, join civil service associations, and think of themselves as urban even when they are stationed in the rural

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

the taxes raised in the district and they meet primarily to discuss the dispensation of these funds. Usually this has to do with items of local improvement such as market stalls in various villages in the district, radios for hamlets and villages, etc. They also draft resolutions asking the emirate government for help in extending roads, building wells, and so on.

The official representative from the capital—previously from the colonial government, now the local government department of the emirate—who attends the meetings provides a link between this group and the central government in Maiduguri. He advises them on what is and what is not feasible in terms of their requests to the central government and also informs them of long-range development policies and plans by the central emirate government.

So far these councils are quite weak. They meet only a few times a year and have a very limited function. However as time goes on they could assume the role of a local legislative and administrative body made up of people who represent the developing needs of ordinary people to participate in decisions affecting their own local areas.

During the last decade or so another form of political activity has come to Bornu in the form of political parties. The traditional authorities, the district heads, lawans, judges, officials of the Native Authority, and all their followers, support the N.P.C. (Northern Peoples Congress) which represents similar interests in other parts of Northern Nigeria and forms the dominant element in the federal government of Nigeria. Several days a week in various parts of Maiduguri, but only rarely in rural areas, public meetings are held under the green flag of the N.P.C. Meetings are usually preceded by drumming and traditional dancing by divorced women. Then party organizers make speeches to the assembled crowds. Sometimes the "big men" such as the district heads or Native Authority Councilors attend these meetings especially around election time, but they themselves and candidates for office do not speak. To do so is considered demeaning for the "big men." Instead party organizers give long, loud harangues extolling the virtues of the N.P.C. and go into great detail about the evils propagated by other political parties in Nigeria.

The overall effect of these political meetings is one of tradition versus its breakdown, good versus evil, ethnic and religious unity and loyalty versus disunity and disloyalty. The real, everyday authority in the lives of the people obviously supports the N.P.C. Thus a vote against this party means much more than a simple political decision to support one contending group of leaders against another; it means that the person is turning against the traditional political structure of the society, and by inference that moral order that holds it together. Listeners at the meetings are constantly presented with moral choices; "are you against our own chiefs, the district heads, lawans, our Shehu?—well *they*, the opposition parties, are; are you against wives being obedient to their husbands?—well *they* are; are you against children being obedient to their parents?—well *they* are," and so on. Stories are told of people whose parents were fine and upstanding citizens who supported and were supported by their leaders. Then their children ran away and supported opposition parties having first rejected the authority, love, affection and support of their own parents. Such people are now vagrants with no families, no proper connections to a respectable Kanuri household, no place in society, and no proper place in the

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

social and moral life of the community. It is prophesied that morality and family life as it is now known could be destroyed if opposition parties ever came to power. Finally, it is always pointed out that opposition parties represent the Southern Nigerians and that a vote for such a group is a vote against Islam, the true religion, and a vote for paganism covered by a thin cloak of Christianity.

During the 1950s when there was an active local opposition party in Bornu under a Kanuri leader, attitudes to the opposition were more clearly seen. The British colonial officials dealt mostly with senior Kanuri members of the Native Authority. Both the British and these Kanuri leaders had an abhorrence of disorder, riots, or activities that could lead to such disturbances. It was thought that allowing Southern Nigerians to organize branches of their own party locally was one thing but having a Kanuri opposition party was quite another. Events proved them correct, for in 1958 riots broke out in Maiduguri between supporters of the N.P.C. and the Bornu Youth League. The ins and outs of these riots need not concern us here, but from that time on the B.Y.L. was crushed. Many of its local leaders fled to other parts of Nigeria or to neighboring Chad to reappear several years later and eventually to become loyal N.P.C. supporters. Today although other Nigerian parties are represented in Bornu, their supporters and local organizers are all non-Kanuri. Thus the emirate government is linked to Nigerian party politics through a one-party organization which represents the traditional authority system of the emirate.

The party and its place as a dominant element in Nigerian politics means that Kanuri leaders have open to them regional and federal appointments. There are Kanuri in the federal cabinet and in the various federal ministries. Up until January 1966, the political head of the N.P.C. and the Premier of the northern region was the Sarduana of Sokoto, and the Governor was Sir Kashim Ibrahim, the former Waziri of Bornu.[1] The old nineteenth century balance of power in this region between the empires of Bornu and Sokoto still remain, then, and both must be represented in the leading positions of this, the largest region of Nigeria.

In summary, Kanuri political organization is basically structured along the lines set up by the colonial era which were built onto those of pre-colonial times. As the emirate has developed a need for more modern political structures these have appeared and are continuing to appear as the society changes towards more modernization and the accumulation of social and economic development. Within this structure modes of behavior are still largely traditional as are the values and political ideology that give the present system its immediate and long range goals. Whether or not modernism and its values will eventually produce a clash with tradition or whether the change will continue to be as smooth and incremental as it has in the past is one of the key questions for the future.

[1] As this is being written the politics of Nigeria, and in all probability its constitutional make-up, are being changed by the effects of the military take-over of the federal government which occurred in January, 1966.

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

What about larger organizations like the emirate political hierarchy and the trading organizations based on stores or canteens, that is to say, modern business enterprises? These obviously contain people who are not members of the same household. Certainly this is true, but often, as in the trading organizations, junior clerks in the store did at one time live in the household of the store owner or still do live there. Much more important, the Kanuri claim, is the fact that the proper way to behave in a political or economic hierarchy is the way one behaves in a household organization or a set of linked households. The junior in the organization gives *barzum* (or discipline-respect) to his superior and in return he receives the benefits of membership, that is to say, he receives a social and political status, protection, and economic gain, for the loyalty and obedience which he delivers to his superior. This to the Kanuri is the most important single behavior in social life. It is learned in the household and then used to link households and individuals together in all of the organizations that are important in the society as a whole. The inference here is that the society is basically and essentially hierarchical—one in which most relationships are of a superior-subordinate variety—and indeed this is true except for friendship groups that do not, however, carry on many of the fundamental activities in Bornu.

It is because this underlying unity is still so firm and central a feature of Kanuri social life that I have not stressed the fact that my trips to Bornu straddle the historic fact of Nigerian independence. Political independence has brought no change in the way in which the bulk of the Kanuri organize their social life and live out the contents of their daily lives in their households, their villages, and their emirate. These modes of behaving have ancient roots in the area, and independence has not witnessed any widespread attempts to change things or to create new modes of organizing the social life of the emirate. Top administrators are now Nigerians, not British colonial officials, but what and how they administer in Bornu is roughly the same as it was in the pre-independence era of the 1950s. When I spoke to some of the leaders of the emirate in 1965 about their understanding of changes that might occur in the political system or the way in which the emirate was organized, they commented that the system was efficient and could serve as a stable, trustworthy form of local political organization through which any changes might come and still keep Bornu as a viable entity for a long time in Nigeria's future.

What is different today, and different only in degree, is the commitment to modernization on the part of top leadership and the initiative they are willing to show in this regard. The leaders are committed whole-heartedly to expanding western education, obtaining better health services, and decreasing disease. They also hope to increase productivity in agriculture and introduce the beginnings of industrialization into Bornu. Steps are being taken in all directions, and only the future can tell what of the past will actually enter into a future that at least on the surface seems in its ultimate goal to be so different from the majestic past and the present of the Kanuri of Bornu.

175 of the empire. In the latter part of the fifteenth century (ca. 1470) the empire was consolidated and the city of Birni Ngazargamu was founded on the River Yobe. It remained the capital of the empire of Bornu for 350 years. In 1507 the former capital of Birni Njimi was recaptured and Kanem became a province of [172] Bornu. The site of Birni Ngazargamu is twenty-five miles from the present town of Geidam, and its extensive ruins can be seen today.

During the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the empire reached its zenith. Its boundaries stretched to Fezzan in the north, beyond Kawar and Tibesti, to the Nile in an easterly direction, and to Dikwa and 175 the districts south of Lake Chad. Many minor states paid 177 [248] tribute to Bornu. At that time Bornu was in close contact with [487] both Egypt and Tripoli. Controlling the southern terminus of the shortest trans-Saharan caravan route, which ran from Tripoli through the Fezzan and the oasis of Bilma to Lake Chad and Birni Ngazargamu, the empire of Bornu was in regular contact with the [411] Mediterranean area in earliest times. Guns were introduced into Bornu from Tripoli at the end of the sixteenth century [179] and became a factor in the expansion of the empire. Via these established trade contacts, Islam came to Bornu in the eleventh [183] century. With the coming of Islam came also the tradition of study and learning which has persisted as a part of Kanuri culture.

175 The institution of slavery had always been a part of this
567
[439]

175 439 formerly been in control of the great trans-Saharan trade routes which brought the products of Negro Africa into the European world, the European nations had established direct trading relations with the coastal peoples by the beginning of the sixteenth century and the importance of the trans-Saharan trade began to dwindle. As trade with the north declined in importance, the Sudanese empires founded on this trade were no longer able to maintain themselves.

175 The empire of Bornu, however, continued to exist though much smaller in size. A new capital, Kukawa, was built near [643] the shores of Lake Chad. The ancient Sef dynasty, whose 'Mais' (kings) had ruled since the beginning of the empire, was replaced by the family of El Kanemi, the Kanembu leader who had [554] been instrumental in driving out the Fulani. The title of [565] Shehu (Sheikh) replaced that of Mai. Within Bornu proper a [423] feudal system existed. Titled nobility were given huge tracts of land by the Shehu. Though these lords lived in Kukawa, the capital, they collected taxes and otherwise administered their lands.

175 648 The weakened empire was unable to resist a final attack, this time from the east. Rabeh, leader of a renegade army from the Sudan which had failed in an attempted revolt there, overran Bornu in 1893. He, in turn, was killed by the French in 175 648 1900. In 1902 British forces entered Bornu, and reestablished the line of the Shehus which had been broken by Rabeh's occupation. The British then ruled in Bornu through the considerably altered organization of the former empire. The Shehu of Bornu,

175 The Shehu of Bornu,
648 however, remains as the religious and political head of the
643 Kanuri people.

C. The Ethnographic Distribution of Peoples in the Area.

197 1. Linguistic Classification.

The Kanuri language, according to Greenberg's classification, is part of the Central Saharan language family, one of the twelve genetically distinct language families which he has isolated in Africa. The Central Saharan language family includes Kanuri, Teda, Dazza, Zaghawa, Baele, Bideyat and Berti, all in contiguous distribution. The Kanuri are the southwesternmost extension of this language family. They are almost completely surrounded by people speaking languages of the Chad family. These include: Hausa, Buduma, Kotoko, Mandara, Marghi, and Bolewa. In this solid block of Chad-speaking peoples the Kanuri form a peninsula of Central Saharan speakers, related to
[174] languages far to the northeast. This is in agreement with the historical sources which trace the movement of the Kanuri into Bornu from the area northeast of Lake Chad.

2. The Major Groups.

648 The historical factors which led to the development of the
177 empire of Bornu and determined its relations to neighboring peoples and states are reflected in the cultural distribution of
[171] peoples in the area today. The Kanuri are one of the many Mos-
[179] lem peoples stretching in a wide belt across the Western Sudan.

648 [101] To the immediate west of the Kanuri are the Hausas over whom the Kanuri once ruled. Signs of the early relationship between [131] Hausa and Kanuri are still in evidence. The Hausa chief of Zinder, a large city in Niger north of Kano, still sent gifts to the Shehu of Bornu as a mark of allegiance upon being appointed to office by the French authorities. The Shehu in British Nigeria then sent him in return a ceremonial robe of office.

167 563 177 The Fulani have continued to infiltrate into Bornu and are numerous in the western sections of the province. In similar fashion, the Shuwa Arabs have in recent times been moving into Bornu from the east. The Shuwa represent the westernmost penetration of the Arabic-speaking African peoples. They are found concentrated in the southeastern sections of Bornu, in [437] [463] the region of Bama and Dikwa. Both the Fulani and the Shuwa are semi-nomadic pastoralists, living in a partially symbiotic relation with the agricultural Kanuri.

3. The Resistant Groups.

177 The Cameroon highlands, sixty miles southeast of Bama, remain the outpost of pagan peoples. The people of the Gwoza hills, one of the last "unpacified" areas in all Nigeria, still continue to resist their Moslem neighbors of the plains, as they had throughout the slave raiding of the Bornu empire. Some seventy thousand people, comprising a number of tribes and speaking several languages, live in the secure isolation of their mountain stronghold, resisting equally the penetration

177 as localized sub-cultures of the Kanuri, of which there are
563 many. However, they are Kanuri culturally and recognize themselves as such.

D. The Over-all Forces Affecting Kanuri Culture.

161 The Kanuri number over a million. Three-quarters of a million Kanuri live in Nigeria. The Republic of the Niger is largely Kanuri in population in its southwestern sections.

178 The culture of a people never remains static; it is con-
105 stantly changing in response to forces, both external and in-
177 ternal. Among the forces instrumental in bringing about changes in Kanuri culture one could cite the introduction of Islam and the concomitant changes occurring in its reinterpretation by the Kanuri; the economic ties with north Africa; the influences of the indigenous population of the Bornu plains as the Kanuri peoples moved into the area; the adaptations demanded by an expanding political system; and finally, the changes resulting from a decline of empire and ultimate conquest. Significant changes are occurring in Kanuri culture today, brought about by contact with Western civilization. The effects of European influence are strongly felt in many areas of life.

1. The Political Situation.

• 648 At the time that this study was carried out (1956-1957)
[01] Nigeria was a British colony, under the political control of the British colonial office. The political situation has changed

648 greatly since that time, as Nigeria is an independent nation today.

The policy of the British in Northern Nigeria had been one of indirect rule. In this manner, a small administrative staff was able to govern a huge area, and the chiefs and Emirs of the North remained the political rulers in their own areas.

631 642 Bornu Province is divided administratively into five Emirates, though the Emirate of Bornu overshadows the remaining four in geographic area, population, and political importance. The Emirates of Bornu and of Bama are Kanuri. The Emirs of Fika, Biu and Gashua rule over three small tribes, discussed in the preceding section, which are within the sphere of Kanuri influ-

634 ence. In addition to the Emirates, the provinces of the North are divided into districts, and each district has an appointed native District Head. The large Emirates are made up of many districts; the small Emirates sometimes have no more than a single district. Bornu Emirate has twenty-one districts.

648 Although the British ruled through the existing political system in Bornu Emirate, they controlled all important policy decisions and they had brought about important changes in the political organization of the Kanuri in order to carry out their policies. The actual relationship between the British Resident, who was in charge of the province, assisted by his staff of District Officers, and the Shehu, his Waziri and the Shehu's Council, differed radically from that officially stated. Although the British administration claimed to be merely advisory, it was

648 the actual administrative power. The twenty-one District Heads
648 in Bornu Emirate were appointed by the Shehu, as was the Waziri,
643 and the members of the Shehu's council. Although these appoint-
634 ments formally need not be approved by the British administra-
tion, in practice their approval was necessary.

634 The system of District Heads replaced the feudal absentee
175 landlords who controlled Bornu in the latter half of the nine-
631 teenth century. Many peasants still refer to their District
178 [651] Head as chima, the name for the feudal lord of former times,
since one of the main functions of the District Head is the
[829] collection of taxes. Although many commoners continue to view
the system today much as their ancestors looked upon the polit-
ical system during the days of the Bornu Empire, radical changes
[642] had been brought about. Under the empire actions and decisions
of the feudal lords were subject only to the disapproval of the
[648] Shehu, the absolute ruler. Today a still larger political unit,
the government of Nigeria, maintains a legal system which pro-
tects all citizens though they may not be aware of it. A Kanuri
could appeal out of his own political system, and seek the pro-
tection of a British District Officer against the ruling of his
own Village Head or District Head. Obviously such a move might
have serious repercussions and not many individuals decided to
take the step. Nevertheless, the alternative existed.

692 In accordance with the British practice of ruling through
779 native institutions where possible, the formal legal system of
Northern Nigeria continued to be Islamic law, more precisely

692 779 Maliki law, a particular school of Islamic law which became established in this part of the Western Sudan. Kanuri judges, trained in the Kano Law School, administer the law as alkalis. But all court records were open to the District Officer (who, incidentally, had Magisterial powers), and though he could not legally overrule an alkali's decisions, the District Officer could be instrumental in having an alkali replaced.

625 648 Still more important, the Native Authority of Bornu Emirate maintains a police force with semi-autonomous functions, which was controlled by a British Assistant Superintendent of Police. He was under the real control of the British Provincial administration, and was able to investigate with a free hand. The actions of the police force served to keep down crime and therefore to protect the citizenry. But the police force served the additional function of indicating to the Kanuri Native Authority that the force behind the legal system was under the control of an outside agency.

665 178 Lastly, with reference to changes in the total political system which effect Kanuri culture, recent years have brought about the development of regional political parties. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the party in power in the House of Assembly of the Northern Region, has been strongly identified with the traditional ruling powers, the Emirs of the North, and is so viewed by the bulk of the population. Opposition parties have grown in importance, particularly in the urban areas where they receive their main support. The Bornu Youth

175 643 642 was indeed absolute. Only the advice of his Imam or of his Koranic Malams might sway or alter his decisions, but this was no more than advice. It might be pointed out to him that a particular course of action was counter to the writings of the Koran, and he might ignore the advice at his peril, but the ultimate decision was his.

2. The Political Organization of the Empire in the Twentieth Century.

175 648 642 178 In 1893 the empire of Bornu suffered what seemed to be the final blow. An army under the leadership of Rabeh, a follower and foster son of Zubeir Pasha of the Sudan, defeated the army of the Shehu of Bornu, overran the empire, and for seven years subjected it to their plunder. In 1900 the French captured and killed Rabeh. Two years later the British entered Bornu. Their first act was to restore the line of the Shehus to the throne. Thus, the empire of Bornu was perpetuated by the colonial powers, though itself unable to resist attack successfully. Restoration by the British brought about a continuation and revival of the old political organization which persists into the present. Through this structure, with some additions and modifications, the British ruled for 58 years in Bornu.

175 648 634 178 From the point of view of the Kanuri villager, the political system under the British was hardly different from that under which his father had lived before the coming of Rabeh. The British did away with the chimas, replacing them with District

175 Heads or Ajias. The only important difference between the two,
178
• 648 from the point of view of the Kanuri farmer, is that the Ajia
634 lived in the capital of his District, while the chima lived in
[642] Kukawa. There were, in fact, great differences between the two, because the British Resident ultimately controlled all policy decisions at the upper levels. But the Kanuri villager knew little of this. It is striking to note how many of the District Heads in 1956-1957 were the heads of the same noble families from which the chimas of the last century were chosen. The British, with or without knowing it, had kept the aristocratic families in positions of political power, at the same time preserving the old political structure of the empire.

175 The Ajias, in their turn, have kept their own kabuna to
634 help them in administering their districts. From their kabuna
632 they have selected the most trusted to serve as Lowans. Since many of the Ajias came from the nobility, they had many slaves whom they inherited from their fathers. These were frequently their most trusted kabuna, though not all kabuna are slaves. Many of the Ajias are slaves of the Shehu, and many of the Lowans are slaves of the Ajias. Ajia and Lowan alike settle disputes, and collect taxes, their two most important functions.
[692]
[651]

C. Religion

779 The Kanuri are Moslems. Islam entered Bornu in the elev-
[175] enth century, and since that time has spread throughout the entire Kanuri population. Unlike the Hausa, where a large part

614 178 is Shetima Mastafa, the Ajia of Kukawa. The head of the Kanembu Tamagari, is Alhaji Mai Manga of N'Guigmi, in Niger, not in [643] [643] Nigeria. When Alhaji Mai Manga was appointed chief of his region by the French authorities the Shehu of Bornu, in British Nigeria, sent him a gown (kulugu) as his mark of office. It was necessary for him to obtain the traditional approval of the [363] Shehu before he could be accepted by the populace. The heads of Shuwa and Fulani jilis are given kulugus by the Shehu, which indicates the political nature of the jili, or sib. However, the heads of the Kanuri jilis today have no functions whatsoever. People come to pay them respect (noogna) as a result of their position, but this is all that remains attached to the position.

F. The System of Social Stratification.

175 565 The old Kanuri system of social stratification recognized four distinct social classes. These were royalty (ngalwo), aristocracy (kantuoma), commoners (talaka), and slaves (kalya). One can distinguish four separate variables, which, when taken together, determine the social importance of any category of individuals. These are: power, wealth, respect, and free-birth; among the Kanuri they can serve as criteria for determining the rank of a social class, or of a single individual within a class.

121 61 66 565 Power is a quality which can be used to define a social relationship, and which derives from the political structure

However, there
565 were great wealth differences between different talaka groups.
556 Traders, artisans, and farmers exhibited enormous wealth dif-
554 ferences between them and, as would be expected, these wealth differences were reflected in the difference in size of household between different types of talaka. In the cities, wealthy traders and well-to-do artisans occupied large compounds along with the many members of their household; while non-specialized laborers, low-status artisans, hand-to-mouth tradesmen, and ordinary farmers lived with their nuclear families in small compounds and at a much lower standard of living.

55 With respect to relative prestige there were also great
792 differences between various types of talaka. The most prestigeful activities are associated with Islam. Piety and study of the Koran earn a man prestige. Devoting one's life to the study of the Koran, by becoming a Malam, earns one great prestige, though the Malam is dependent on charity and consequently can never be a wealthy man. At the top of the religious hierarchy there are individuals who may be powerful (since the Shehu is advised by his Malams) and wealthy, but these are exceptional individuals. Malams as a group enjoy great prestige, but little power or wealth.

h. Changes in the Stratification System.

• 648 At the time of the present study (1956-1957), Bornu was
642 under British colonial rule, so that although the structure
178 of the empire, with the Shehu at its apex, was still in exist-
565

698 ence, British administrative officers made all final policy de-
642 cisions. Since the system of social stratification finds its
178 support in the political organization of the Kanuri state, and
565 since that state is no longer the ultimate authority of the land, one might expect great changes in the social system today. While significant changes have been occurring, the old system of social stratification has been able to survive, in certain respects supported and bolstered by British colonial rule. It continues to shape Kanuri society today and to adapt itself to new conditions and new demands.

[693] The Shehu and the royal family are still present, and the Shehu continues to wield political power. Though a British resident was the ultimate authority, he acted through the Shehu
[829] and the Shehu's council. In the eyes of the Kanuri people, the Shehu still was the symbol of the Kanuri state, though all Kanuri recognized that the White man (nasara) was present as super-authority.

178 Titled nobility are still present, and retain much of
565 their political power since they still control the great ma-
634 jority of District Headships. It is striking to note how many Ajias, who replaced the chimas of old, are the heads of old noble families and the present holders of great Kanuri titles,
[829] both slave and free. The descendants of the chimas are the bulk of the Ajias, so it is not surprising that the talaka continue to view them as chimas and to use the term in referring to their present Ajia.

GEIDAM

491 dam with other towns first skirts the several canteens of the
[366] European trading companies as it enters the town, proceeds
across a wide open area of a mile until it reaches the town
361 proper, and terminates in a parking area. The town itself has
no wall, and no sharp boundary line marks its outer edges. In
three directions, south, east, and north, the town is bounded
by fields of millet, which begin immediately after the outlying
compounds end. To the west of the town lies the river Yobe,
but a strip of land about half a mile in width separates the
[244] river from the edges of the town. In that area are to be found
[134] garden plots, since the land along the river is particularly
[36] fertile, and, closer to the town, stock yards, the slaughtering
[232] area, and the cattle market, with its pens. Northwest of the
town is the tiny adjoining village of Koldi.

361 Southwest of the town, and south of the cattle market, is
• 648 the Government Reserve Area, a section of land reserved by the
colonial administration in every sizeable town and city where
Europeans are supposed to reside. It is physically set apart
from the African town. In this case, the sole government build-
ing is the Touring Rest house, over a mile from the town, high
on the banks overlooking the Yobe River. Another larger house,
remnant of a time when an army unit was stationed here years
ago, was rebuilt during the course of the year, and occupied
by the Governor-General of Nigeria, Sir James Robertson, during
a brief stay in Geidam. The Government Rest House is occupied
by British administrative officials in their tours of inspection

[GEIDAM]

361 through the district. There are no European officials permanent-
• 648 ly stationed in Geidam, though a young Assistant District Offi-
cer on his first tour of duty did spend three months in Geidam
[366] in the course of the author's year of residence there. Along
with the Government Rest House, the Government Reserve Area in-
cludes the canteens of the various European trading companies
who have offices in Geidam, and the houses of their managers.
361 There are six trading companies doing business in Geidam, three
177 under the management of Europeans, and three under African man-
[439] agers. The three Europeans, two Cypriotes and one Greek (form-
erly a Swiss, then replaced by a Greek), represent the entire
White population of Geidam. Two operate branch offices of larger
companies; one is in business for himself. The three African
managers are in charge of branches of large trading companies,
two British (United Africa Company and John Holt) and one French
company (Société de la Compagnie de Ouest Afrique). Thus, the
small European population of the town, and the agents of the
Western world who make their presence most felt, the colonial
administration and the trading companies, are physically removed
from the people of Geidam. They come periodically to do what
they must in the town, and return to their own sections, and
people of the town go out to them to deal with them. There is
no opportunity for continual, indiscriminate interaction between
[14] the Kanuri populace and these agents of the Western world. In
order to do anthropological field work in such a situation, it
became immediately apparent that it would be necessary to live

[GEIDAM]

44 439 177 down the packages in which goods arrive, selling bundles of matches tied together or coca-cola bottles filled with kerosene, from their tables in the market-place.

[244] [237] [64] The export goods of the Geidam area are groundnuts, cowhides, sheep and goat skins and gum arabic. The same European trading companies that import the various sorts of goods mentioned above also handle the exports of the region, and the same network of Kanuri and Hausa tradesmen is involved in the collection and sale of peanuts and hides and skins to the trading companies, save that some tradesmen specialize entirely in dealing in hides and skins, while others deal only in groundnuts. Many of the important canteen owners also buy groundnuts as agents of the particular company from which they buy cloth, once the harvest season begins. This trade, too, involves the use of large amounts of credit which the trading company extends to its list of reliable and wealthy Kanuri traders (balɔsma) who have been dealing with the same company for many seasons. Long before the groundnuts are harvested, the agents of a Kanuri trader, trusted members of his household and relatives, go out into the countryside giving cash to the farmers who thus pledge their entire crop to a particular trader. When the crop is harvested, most of it goes directly to Kanuri middlemen who have distributed the cash advanced to them by the European trading companies, and through them the groundnuts come into the hands of the trading companies. Eventually the entire groundnut crop of Northern Nigeria is sold to the Groundnut

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[418]

[GEIDAM]

Marketing Board for whom the trading companies act as agents. The Kanuri trader who brings in a large share of the groundnut crop in the Geidam area to the particular trading company which has extended credit to him receives a commission and is assured that he will again receive credit from that company in the coming year. If he has succeeded in bringing in large amounts of groundnuts, he will receive more money to work with in the coming year. If he has not done well, or if the money advanced to him has been squandered by his "people" (usually the members of his household), then his credit will suffer and may even be entirely eliminated. Should that happen, his entire household would suffer.

Hides and skins and gum arabic are bought by Kanuri traders and sold to the trading companies in the same manner, except that there is no government Marketing Board dealing in these commodities so that the trading companies are not protected against a drop in the market price. Kanuri traders dealing in hides and skins work with a single company and are advanced cash by that company for purchases. Through their "men", who buy hides directly at the slaughtering area, these wealthy traders deliver the hides and skins to the trading company. Gum arabic is of lesser importance, and not all the European companies deal in it. If the world market price is high, they will make greater efforts to obtain a large portion of the crop.

This is the trade network through which the Kanuri economy articulates with the world economy, and in particular with the

634 trict. The Alkali is in charge of the Geidam District court,
692 a grade 'C' court according to the British ranking system, but
812 the most important of the district courts. The Headmaster and his three teachers run the Geidam Primary School. The various experts, such as the veterinary, dispenser, etc., are all educated men who have been trained in their specialty. They are, however, NA appointees and are directly under the authority
632 of the Ajia. Only the Lowans are concerned solely with the town itself, and they, too, it will be seen, are directly responsible to the Ajia.

• 648 634 The British instituted a formal Village Council, with an elected membership of fifteen to twenty. The Ajia is Chairman, and Alhaji Amadu Kolon, an important canteen owner and trader, is the elected vice-chairman. There is also a District Council similarly instituted, with the Ajia again as Chairman. Its twenty-five to thirty members are all Lowans of Geidam Dis-
178 trict, save for four or five. In contrast to these formal councils, there is an informal and traditional Kanuri council which consists of the people who come and sit at the gateway (chinna) of the Ajari while Yerima Mustapha is arbitrating disputes. It is made up of a shifting membership, some more permanent than others, which includes important kabuna of the Ajia's, NA officials who are in a special relationship with the Ajia, and some of the important citizens of the town.

634 692 Only the Alkali is not under the direct authority of the Ajia, and in theory the courts and the executive branch, repre-

634 692 sented by the Ajia and those under him, are supposed to operate independently and to serve as checks on one another. In Geidam, Yerima Mustapha and Alkali Baba Kura work together very closely. As will be seen, the system of social stratification and the personal histories of the Geidam power elite operate to prevent the independent functioning of the several arms of

178 • 648 63 government. When the social system persists and old Kanuri values are adhered to, as happens in Geidam, the traditional political system continues to operate despite new forms instituted by the British colonial rulers.

177 178 625 648 The manner in which this occurs can be seen most clearly in the following example describing the functioning of the police in Geidam. Nigeria has a dual police system: the Nigerian Police, an arm of the Federal Government, and NA Police, part of the Native Authority system. The Bornu NA Police are under a European Assistant Superintendent of Police, stationed in Maiduguri. Among his important concerns is the theft of livestock, particularly in the northernmost districts, since cattle are easily moved across the frontier and sold in Niger, out of

[661] the jurisdiction of the Bornu NA Police. The Assistant Superintendent of Police had strong suspicions that collaboration between thieves and political officials on both sides of the border was preventing the apprehension of criminals. He thought that Lowans and Ajias might be hiding and protecting thieves and sharing in their profits. Consequently, he considered it imperative that the Police operate independently of the other

[GEIDAM]

177 178 625 648 branches of the NA administration. Geidam has a Police Charge Office and a prison. Heading the police contingent in Geidam is a Sergeant, with two corporals and about fifteen men in his command. In September, 1956 the Sergeant in command was Sergeant Ali. He seemed to have a good relationship with both Alkali Baba Kura and with Yerima Mustapha, yet two months later he was replaced by a new man, Sergeant Usman. The reasons given were that he had had difficulties with the Ajia, who had asked that he be replaced. Sergeant Usman was not seen in the Ajari frequently, although Sergeant Ali had often been present there. It was not until late in the field trip that the information was revealed (in private, of course) that the new Sergeant, Sergeant Usman, was a slave of Yerima's. Years ago, at the death of Laminu Jitia, the great-grandfather of Yerima Mustapha, the Shehu took for himself most of his property including a slave called Kazella Kadria. This, of course, is the Shehu's prerogative towards his kabuna, of which Laminu Jitia was one of the most prominent. Kazella Kadria was the grandfather of Sergeant Usman, who, strictly speaking, was a slave of the Shehu's. His own father grew up as a slave of the Shehu, but Sergeant Usman knows that Yerima Mustapha is the direct lineal descendant and successor to the position of his great-grandfather Laminu Jitia, to whom Sergeant Usman's grandfather once belonged, and he behaves accordingly to Yerima Mustapha, the Ajia of Geidam. This relationship is never mentioned by either party, but it can be seen permeating every

177 178 625 648 567 571

177 178 625 648 567 571 aspect of their behavior towards one another. Sergeant Usman comes only to report to Yerima each morning; otherwise he is never in the Ajari. He is absolutely trustworthy, and in retrospect it is evident that he was brought to Geidam to be in charge of the NA Police there because of this. The nature of the relationship between the Ajia and the Sergeant is, of course, unknown to the British administration and to the European Assistant Superintendent of Police, but in that relationship and in its effective use by Yerima Mustapha can be seen the persistence of the traditional social system, as well as the frustration of newer bureaucratic forms introduced by the British.

571 662 178 The relationship between the Ajia and the Geidam Police is typical in a general sense of all relationships within the political hierarchy centering in Geidam, though it is not always possible to see the structural lines as clearly as in a [Sol] slave-master situation. Another special NA appointee in Geidam, Malam Jalo, operates the ferry crossing the Yobe River during its flood. This is a well-paying job, and is highly coveted. Malam Jalo is a member of an important family, and has political influence at the court which enabled him to get the appointment. He acts like a kabuna of Yerima's, and considers himself to be a kabuna though his job is entirely independent of that performed by the kabuna. By placing himself in the relationship of a kabuna to the Ajia, he defines his role in the political system, and at the same time indicates

his allegiance to the Ajia who might otherwise be tempted to replace him with one of his own men.

The kabuna represent a special category in the administration of the district. The colonial administration makes no provision for the kabuna; they are not NA appointees as are all the other officeholders mentioned above; they receive no salary. Yet, the services which they perform are vital if the district bureaucracy is to continue to function smoothly. The kabuna represent a traditional Kanuri social category whose roles are primarily in the political sphere. The roles of the kabuna have been slightly modified and adapted to the modern situation, but the relationship between kabuna and Ajia and between kabuna and populace is a traditional one and is once again typical of the persistence of the old social stratification system into the present.

Yerima Mustapha has fifty-nine kabuna at Geidam. Some are slaves; some are free. Many have been with Yerima for years and years. Head of all the kabuna is Wakil Ali, a slave. The kabuna are each given a house to live in, a horse belonging to Yerima, a plot of land to farm, and ceremonial trappings for themselves and for their horses. In turn, they swear allegiance to Yerima and work for him.

2. A history of important office-holders in Geidam.

The present town of Geidam is on the site of an old town called Dəmjeri. Five miles to the west of the present Geidam

[GEIDAM]

175 [103] was an old town called Geidam Balara, from which the town today takes its name. In the eighteenth century, when the capital of Bornu was at Birni Ngazargamo not far off, Geidam was part of the Mai's lands. Later, when Kukawa became the capital, and the Mais were replaced by the Shehus, Geidam became part 175 634 [632] of the fief granted to the Imam. Since Geidam District is very large, it was divided among a number of chimas. The town of Geidam (Damjeri and Geidam Balara, at that time) was controlled by Kazella Ibrahim Geidama, a slave of the Imam who served as chima gana (literally little chima--serving the real chima who lived in the capital). Geidam was a kalyari, an area under the authority of a slave.

The first Ajia of Geidam, in the early years of the twentieth century was Kazella Sulama, a slave of the Shehu's. He was followed by Aba Rəfəgə, a son of Shehu Ibrahim, who served [645] as Ajia of Geidam until his death in 1915. Maiduguri had not yet been built and the Mounted Infantry, along with many Europeans, were stationed in Geidam. Aba Rəfəgə was the most important of the Ajias at that time. Kazella Kakami (Kaigama) then became the Ajia of Geidam, where he served for almost thirty years until his death in January, 1944. Kaigama Kakami was the son of Kaigama Bilel, the commander of the army during the days of Shehu Laminu. His son, Kaigama Zubairu, succeeded to the title of Kaigama and to the office of Ajia of Geidam. Kaigama Zubairu remained Ajia of Geidam for ten years, until he was demoted to a smaller district, Damboa, in 1954. In 1954 Yerima

693 Maiduguri. He also holds the post of Alkali for Maiduguri
554 District. Replacing Alkali Baba Kura in Geidam was another young man, Alkali Tijani Nanami, whose father had also been the Alkali in Geidam years earlier, in 1939-1940. Thus the same families tend to retain their positions of power and
[66] prestige in the social system. If the past can serve as a reliable guide, Yerima will again further the career of the new Alkali, so long as he sees that his help is appreciated and rewarded by proper reciprocal behavior, and in this way the close bond which he has always seemed to create and maintain with Alkalis in his district will serve to smooth the way in the administration of his district.

3. The Role of Authority Figures: Sholo.

627 A very widespread Kanuri method of obtaining in-group
692 justice is through the arbitration of disputes by a person in a position of authority. This practice is called sholo. Disputants within a particular craft or occupation will go to the head of their craft group for arbitration. The head of the zogors arbitrates disputes between zogors. The Lowan arbitrates disputes within his ward or his village. The wakil has disputants brought to him; he then presents them before the Ajia
[648] for sholo. The Alkali will settle disputes out of court. The British officially forbade Lowans and Ajias from hearing cases
[779] and arbitrating in disputes. However, Alkali Baba Kura says that according to the Koran, the settlement of disputes through

[GEIDAM]

627 Alkalis as Yerima is with Alkali Baba Kura, but Yerima would
663 put his influence to use only when affairs arise which directly
661 concern him.

627 In the eyes of talaka, sholo is the major means for keeping
829 the peace. They do not distinguish sharply between the resolu-
671 tion of conflicts through sholo and through judgments handed down in the courtroom. The Kanuri do not conceive of an impartial legal system which grants all individuals equal protection. Law is conceived of as mediation granted by particular individuals, some more trustworthy than others. Whether one brings one's complaint before the Ajia, the Alkali, or the Lowan depends on whether one has greater trust in the Ajia, the Alkali, or the Lowan. In any case, one brings one's complaint to be heard by a single man, with his particular whims, idiosyncracies and prejudices, and one chooses the man in whom one has the greatest confidence. According to the British view, sholo given by an Ajia or Lowan is not permitted, and is therefore not binding on the parties involved. A man who has received an unfavorable decision in sholo can complain to the court and the decision will be overruled. The Ajia or Lowan who heard the case will have difficulty because of it. This rarely happens because the talaka sees the situation from an entirely different viewpoint. When he brings a case for sholo and receives an adverse ruling, the dispute must end there as he has done everything possible for him to do in the situation, particularly if no bribes have been given (to his knowledge)

000 unduly exploiting the populace.

651 The second duty is to collect taxes. These fall into two categories: haraji--a tax on houses, sheep and goats, and [563] other forms of property and jangali--a tax on cattle. Since cattle are so important in the economy of the area, much tax revenue is derived from jangali of which there are three forms: nomad jangali, collected from the semi-nomadic pastoral peoples, Kwoyam, Buduwai, Shuwa Arab, and particularly Fulani, by far the largest pastoral group in Geidam; village jangali; [632] road and market jangali. Haraji and village jangali are collected by the Lowans of each village. Within the town of Geidam, road and market jangali is collected by Lowan Kolo Kolo [634] since the market lies within his ward. Nomad jangali is collected by the Ajia.

651 632 634 Several months before haraji is to be collected the Lowan compiles a list of all tax payers under his jurisdiction. This list is sent to Maiduguri and then to Kaduna, the capital of the Northern Region, for inspection. On its return to him, he collects the haraji tax. In Geidam District a kabuna is sent off to each Lowan in the district to be present when the lists [648] are compiled. This is counter to British colonial regulations which are designed to make the Lowan independent of the Ajia, [626] and responsible only to the provincial administration. Yerima's argument, however, is that the Lowans will not properly assess their villagers unless a stranger, the kabuna, is present to assure that they do not under-assess in making up the lists.

651 increase of 6,000 cows. The tax figures for Geidam District
634 in 1956 are as follows:
[652]

village jangali - 30,000 cows			
nomad jangali - 39,000 cows	taxes collected =	£	17,500
road and market jangali			3,000
haraji			41,000
total taxes		£	61,500

Geidam is a large, populous district and the sums involved in
[433] tax collection are correspondingly large. Because Geidam has a large farming population, it has less bush area to accommodate nomadic Fulani and the number of cows on which nomadic jangali
651 is collected is smaller than in Magumeri District. Yerima
634 Mustapha's approach to jangali collection is to reconcile two
563 seemingly conflicting goals. On the one hand he attempts to attract Fulani Ardos into his district; on the other hand he attempts to collect jangali for every single cow within the district. Digma, the Ajia of Magumeri District, doesn't try to attract Fulani into his district, nor can he collect jangali for all the cows already there, though he tours a great deal and covers much of the area himself, which Yerima does not do.

651 The contrast presented by the two Ajias, Yerima and Dig-
634 ma, is enlightening. From the point of view of the British,
663 Yerima does an excellent job in administering his district, and
156 in particular in collecting taxes. The amount which Yerima
[648] brings in to the NA treasure is steadily increasing, and there is no reason for investigating his methods as there are no complaints. Yerima organizes his kabuna, who do the actual work of collecting taxes. Yerima himself does not perform the physi-

56 177 [554] 177 567 565 648 prestige, and the distinction between slave and free-born. The direct influence of the British colonial administration has removed the legal support behind the master-slave relationship, so that slaves can no longer be bought and sold, and slaves who have run away cannot be forcibly returned to their masters by the police. This has radically altered the relation between master and slave, so that the distinction between slave and free-born is significant only in special cases.

64 177 178 565 By and large, the colonial administration, because of its policy of indirect rule, has allowed political power to remain in the hands of the same segments of the society as previously held power. However, some changes have been made by the British, so that representatives are elected to a Northern House of Assembly and to a Federal Legislature. In Geidam, 634 177 178 565 political power is largely in the hands of the Ajia, who typifies the aristocracy. Yerima Mustapha as Ajia of Geidam is a perfect example of the aristocrat who has skillfully adapted to the changes demanded of a present-day Ajia, and at the same time has succeeded in perpetuating the old social order. Other positions of power such as those of the Lowans, are held by men faithful to him, chosen from his kabuna, another traditional group which has continued on into the present in Geidam. [648] The position of Alkali in Geidam is held by still another member of the aristocracy; and what is more, the Alkali of Geidam, Alkali Baba Kura, was elected representative to the

[GEIDAM]

634 Northern House of Assembly. An elected office created by the
177 British which is an important new source of power has been
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565 successfully captured by a member of the old aristocracy which
[648] previously held all political power. Other new offices cre-
ated by the colonial administration are to be found in the
634 District and Town Councils. Thus far, the District and Town
632 Councils in Geidam are dominated by the Ajia. But the member-
177 ship of the Town Council in particular is largely composed of
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565 wealthy traders and a few craftsmen, who are all talaka. These
665 talaka do not yet have real political power but they have more
648 symbolic power than talaka have ever had before, and their po-
sitions may in time give them real power. The same is also
true for the officers of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC)
in Geidam, who are also talaka and controlled by the Ajia, but
who may in time emerge with real power through their positions
within the dominant political party in Bornu and in Northern
Nigeria. As yet, rival political parties in the North, the
Northern Elements Peoples Union (NEPU) and the Bornu Youth
Movement (BYM), have been effective only in large cities like
Maiduguri. They have made little impression in Geidam.

439 Perhaps the greatest changes in community structure have
177 been those brought about by influences of the Industrial West
433 on trade, particularly on external trade. Though trade has
always been important in Kanuri culture and middlemen in trade
have always existed as specialists in Kanuri cities, it is
probable that a larger proportion of the total economy is de-

than Kanuri, and communication with the managers of the various trading companies in Geidam is in Hausa. Knowledge of Hausa among the Kanuri canteen operators is reflected in their attitudes towards the Hausa generally. This can be seen in the willingness of the Canteen Operators to marry Hausa women (see Table XXXV). Hausa is also the language of the colonial bureaucracy in Northern Nigeria, and all Europeans in administration have learned to speak Hausa. The number of Kanuri speakers among the European administrative personnel in Bornu Province is negligible. Therefore most of the Aristocracy and all of the NA Malams speak Hausa. In the remaining five groups, 11 individuals speak Hausa and 16 do not. Most of the lower class groups do not have much contact with Hausas and consequently do not speak their language.

With respect to knowledge of English, the picture is even more clear-cut. Only seven people in the sample speak English. One aristocrat (Yerima Mustapha) speaks a little English, and the entire group of NA Malams, all having been educated in European-style schools, speak English. No one else has any knowledge of the language.

It is interesting to note that knowledge of other languages is a common occurrence in this area. Fifteen cases of speakers of six additional languages are found in this small sample. Of course a few individuals speak several languages, while others speak only Kanuri. There are six speakers of Shuwa Arabic, and five speakers of Fulani represented. There are almost as many

*177 the usefulness of the activities in which the agents of this
75 authority engage. Taken at face value, the response of the
*829 Aristocracy in column 5 seems to make little sense. Its mean-
*565 ing becomes apparent when the role of this group within the
744 social structure is understood in relation to the behavioral area being investigated.

691 Arbitration of disputes between individuals has been dis-
627 cussed in some detail in the sections dealing with political
*177 organization. The traditional Kanuri way of dealing with inter-
648 personal disputes is for the complainant to bring his dispute before an authority figure for arbitration. For the bulk of the populace this means that disputes are brought before the Lowan or the Ajia. The Alkali is also a part of traditional Kanuri society but his authority now derives from external sources. British colonial government has set up the judiciary as an arm of government, and the Kanuri Alkali is part of this larger system. The decisions of the Alkali given in court are backed up by this external source of power. The judgments of the Lowan or the Ajia when he hears cases in sholo receive their support solely from the power vested in positions within Kanuri society. Willingness to take disputes to court, therefore, represents a tendency to seek for sanctions outside of
*177 traditional Kanuri society. The data on this question are pre-
691 sented in Table XXVIII. Responses in column 1 state simply
627 that the individual would bring his complaint before the Ajia
*829 (or Lowan). The attitude of the Talaka whose response is re-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 291]

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is also supported by estimates made by officials of the Bornu agricultural department whose records indicate that only seven per cent of the total Emirate land area is under cultivation while another eight to nine per cent is resting land. Since the agricultural potential of the area is relatively homogeneous this means that there is no land pressure and no problem of over-population.

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Bornu Emirate is a political unit, among others, within Bornu Province and the latter is in turn one of the provinces making up the Northern Region, the largest of the three regions, of Nigeria. The Emirate is under the nominal rule of the Shehu of Bornu and his council, with this latter body under the executive direction of the Wasiri of Bornu. These leaders all reside at the Emirate capital, Maiduguri, which is also the capital of Bornu Province. The entire area of the Emirate is divided into twenty-one districts each under a District Head who resides in the district capital. In its turn, each district is sub-divided into village areas under the headship of a Lawan (village area head). Finally under the Lawan are the wards of his village and the hamlets surrounding his village within the village area boundaries. These wards and hamlets are headed by men called Bulama.

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The colonial government cuts across this semi-traditional structure. Its center is at Kaduna, the capital of the Northern Region of Nigeria, and its representatives reside throughout the region, with their headquarters at each provincial capital. The Resident Officer of Bornu Province is the senior colonial official in the province and is responsible to Kaduna for the administration of several Emirates and divisions of the province of which Bornu Emirate is only one, albeit the largest. Government departments of education, forestry, agriculture, and the like are responsible for their programs throughout the entire province and work through local native authority departments in each Emirate.

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[131] a large Empire with the result that Kanem became a well known state in the Islamic world of the 12th century. By the 13th century, Kanem had extended itself to include a large region in the Chad basin, including present day Bornu, and more importantly was in control of the central
175 Sahara with its trade route to Tripoli.(1) Friendship was contracted with
• 648 the Hafsid rulers of Tunis, and we are told by Ibn Said writing at this time that a giraffe was sent by the King of Kanem to the Sultan of Tripoli
[779] as a present. He further notes that the practice of Islam is widespread amongst the population of Kanem at this time.(2) Kachim Biri, the reigning monarch from 1242-43 A.D., ordered the construction of a traveler's house for Kanuri pilgrims in the city of Cairo.(3) At the other end of the Muslim world, in Spain, a poet from Kanem was employed at this period in the court of El Mansur (1190-1214) at Seville, to sing the Sultan's praises. We are told by Lady Lugard that early references describe this person as a "learned and cultured poet, a black of the Sudan, Abu Ishak al Kanemi".(4)

Although information on the internal affairs of Kanem is scarce for this period, these outward ripples indicate extensive contacts and peaceful relations between a well organized state and the rest of the Muslim world of the 12th and 13th centuries. Since the early Arabic travellers who came to Ghana, Mali and Songhai were often told of the existence of Kanem to the east, it can be assumed that contacts across the Sudan were kept up and utilised as much as the northerly ones.(5)

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669 Local tradition in Bornu at the time of Barth's visit (1851) explained the eventual collapse of the great empire of Kanem in an interest-

(1) Ibn Said writing of the rule of Dunama Ahmed (1221-1295 A.D.) says it included present day Bornu. Later writers claimed that Bornu reached to the Nile in this period. (See, Barth, H. op. cit.Vol.II, p. 641.)
(2) Urvoy, Y. op. cit., 1949, p. 369.
(3) Burckhardt, J.L., Travels in Nubia, (London) 1819.
(4) Shaw, F.L., (Lady Lugard), op. cit. p 65.
(5) See, Battutu Ibn, Travels in Asia and Africa, trans.H.A.R. Gibb (London) 1929.

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669 ing fashion. The legend claims[1] that Dunama, the great 17th Mai of Kanem (1221-1259 A.D.) "laid the foundation for the ensuing disaster of the Empire by opening the sacred talisman of Bornu", for it (the talisman) called forth and provoked every powerful man to ambition and intrigues, and there followed after this reign a period of civil wars, and rapid changes in the monarchy, often involving regicide. It was at this time that the vassal state of the Bulala on the eastern boundary of Kanem grew towards an ever stronger independence, and finally toppled the Kanuri kingdom. We are told in the Chronicle translated by Barth that during the reign of the 27th Mai, Daud (1377-1386 A.D.) the Kanuri were decisively
[131] beaten by the Bulala.[2] By 1394 A.D., the 31st Mai, Omar (1394-1398 A.D.) finally gave up Kanem and came to Bornu proper to set up a kingdom in retreat somewhere between the present city of Maiduguri and the town of Gujba.

There followed a period of unrest and internal strife for about 75 years, during which many kings took the throne and were in turn overthrown or murdered. The kingdom was in a constant state of civil war
175 within and set upon by enemies from without. Palmer[3] in his researches
= 648 has found references to a letter sent at this time to Cairo from the Kanuri monarch, asking the Caliph to order the Arabs of Wadai to stop helping the Bulala raid amongst the Kanuri for slaves, since they (the Kanuri) were all good Muslims, and not infidels to be treated as potential slaves for the taking. More evidence of the "Sturm und Drang" quality of the period is indicated by the fact that a Mai of this time lived away from Bornu in the Hausa city of Kano which had been in the past a vassal state of the Kanuri empire.

(1) Barth, H., op. cit. Vol. II; King list, pp 633-671.
(2) Ibid; p. 634.
(3) Palmer, H. The Bornu Sahara and Sudan,(London) 1936, p. 218

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642 However, resuscitation was at hand. In the last part of the 15th century, the kingdom was reconsolidated by the 48th Mai, Ali Ghajideni (1472-1504 A.D.), who quelled the civil wars and restored some measure of peace between the high ranking officials, with himself firmly [103] in authority. He built a new capital, Birni Gazargamo on the river Ye [361] (Komadu'u Yobe), about half way between the present towns of Damasak and Geidam, on the border of Nigeria and French West Africa in Bornu Province. [648] His reign was marked by the re-conquest of the territory of Kanem, north- [721] east of Chad, the extension of Bornu hegemony into Boriu and Tibesti in the north, and continual but indecisive warfare against the powerful empire 175 of Songhai in the west. It is also about this time that Bornu is first mentioned in the early European maps of Africa put out by the Portugese cartographers of the late 15th century. Mai Ali's reign was followed by a series of others no less notable, including that of Mai Idris Alooma, for whom we have a contemporary record written by his court scribe sometime around the beginning of the 17th century.(1) It is Idris who is supposed to have introduced the technique of burnt brick into the area. However, there is some doubt on this point for it is known that the Songhai king Mansa Musa brought back from his great pilgrimage a Granada poet and architect, Es Saheli, who built a mosque at Gao (200 miles due east of Timbuctu on the Niger) of burnt brick at the beginning of the 14th century.(2)

[721] When the second empire was founded at Birni Gazargamo, fighting increased against the So, a people with whom the Kanuri seem to have 174 fought continually throughout their history. A small digression must be made here in order to assess these often mentioned So people of the ancient traditions. These people are said to have been native to the Bornu

(1) Ahmed ibn Fartua: History of the First Twelve Years of the Mai Idris Alooma, 1571-1583, by his Imam; trans. by H.R. Palmer, 1926.
(2) Bovill, E.W., Caravans of the Old Sahara, London, 1933, p. 73

174 area before the arrival of the Kanuri. French workers claim that the Kotoko tribe who live today around the area of Fort Lamy are the contemporary descendants of the ancient So peoples, and French archeologists have been digging up "So" sites for some years.(1) Kanuri traditions speak of the So as "giants" whom they finally vanquished after suffering great tribulations. Many of the monarchs in the Bornu King lists are described as dying in battle against the So. The stories of these "giants" are not however confined to Kanuri traditions, but can be found all over the Chad area, and well up into the desert, especially around Bilma.(2) This last point suggests a hypothesis that the So were really not any one group of people but a linguistic category in the Central Sahara, referring to aboriginal inhabitants who opposed the incoming group, or, against whom "our" group had to fight in times gone by. To support this argument, there is the evidence that the word So is an Arab usage from the Maghreb, which refers generally to all dark skinned peoples of Tibesti and the Sudan.(3) When it is realized that the first writers of Kanuri history must have been able to speak Arabic, as well as having a knowledge of its script, it is not surprising that this North African word for the indigenous people of the Sudan should be carried down to the present day. This leads to the conclusion that any search for the So culture, using the traditions of the present day inhabitants, is doomed to disappointment, for it is most likely that there was not one, but many So cultures and peoples.

175 • 648 Soon after the founding of the city of Birni Gasargamo, Bornu achieved a florescence in its history. During this second zenith of the Kanuri empire, Bornu vied with Songhai as the most powerful of the great Sudanic states. Embassies were maintained at Tripoli and the Hausa states

(1) Seliquer Capitaine; Elements d'une Etude Archeologique du Pays du Tchad, Bull. IFAN, Vol. 7, 1945, pp.191-209.
(2) Buchanan, Angus; Sahara, quoted in Palmer, R. op. cit., p. 126.
(3) Bovill, W.E., op. cit. p.23.

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648 paid tribute to imperial Bornu, although very often the Songhai would extend themselves and the Hausa would face around for a short while to bow to the suzerainty of Timbuctu.(1) Kanuri power also extended up into the Fezzan taking in the important salt works of Bilma. In the east, Bornu hegemony probably reached into the Darfur region and in the south to the present town of Biu in south Bornu.(2)

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178 From this pinnacle of majesty at the beginning of the 17th century a slow decline ensued which continued from the time of the 55th Mai, Muhammed (1602-1618 A.D.), son of Mai Idris Alooma, through the 18th century until the collapse of the second Kanuri empire in 1808. Although none of the writers are agreed on the causes of this decline it is possible that the monarchy and the court life had become so overly elaborate and ritualized, that it hampered the operation of effective leadership in a state requiring constant vigilance and warfare for its survival. It is reported that throughout almost the entire 18th century, the Mais rarely, if ever, left the confines of the palace during their reigns.(3) Traditions during this period tell of famines and pious leadership, rather than administrative and military successes.

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721 From about the 14th century onwards a nomadic cattle people, the Fulani, had been filtering into the Sudan from the northwest and slowly moving across the whole of what is today Northern Nigeria. In February of 1804, for a number of political and religious reasons, a Fulani religious leader, Othman dan Fodio, declared a Hejira, or Flight from Digal (evil), which was an expression of defiance and aggression towards the Hausa leaders. From this period forward he and his warrior-scholar son, Bello, carried on a holy war in the Sudan that resulted finally in an empire

(1) Shaw, F. L. (Lady Lugard), op. cit. p. 279
(2) Arkell, A.J. The History of Darfur; Sudan Notes and Records, Vol. 33 p. 246.
(3) Stenning, D. Nomads of the Great Forest (Ms.) 1955

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

[p. 34]

Chapter III

The Colonial Period

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The particular events and social changes occurring in Bornu during the last half century must be viewed as taking place within the larger setting of the British colonial regime of Northern Nigeria. For our present purposes, it is sufficient to note that during this period an English colonial administration had been grafted onto the indigenous social systems of the Northern Region through the use of what has come to be called "indirect rule".(1) This conjunction of the African social systems under the subordination of colonial rule has resulted in expanding trade, the inception of western education, the development of a native civil service, increased contact with other tribal groups, and a network of modern roads and means of communication. How these changes and the policy of "indirect rule" have affected Bornu is the concern of the present chapter.

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Before the British arrived in Bornu, the French had already defeated and killed Rabeh and his son. They then re-instated the Kanuri Shehu, Sanda Kura, and subsequently his younger brother Garbai. These two ruled from Dikwa, Rabeh's old capital, which at the turn of the century was considered to be in French territory. The French allowed the Kanuri rulers to institute any system of political organization they wished as long as they could deliver 80,000 Maria Theresa dollars per annum to the French as tribute. In 1902, Governor Lugard sent Captain Morland to Bornu and it is reported that the Captain ". . . sent for Garbai and formally installed him as Shehu of British Bornu at Kuka."(2)

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(1) See Lugard, F.D. (Sir) The Dual Mandate, (London) 1929; Cook, A.N. British Enterprise in Nigeria, (Philadelphia) 1943; Burns, (Sir) Alan, History of Nigeria, (London) 1955; Coleman, J.S., Nigeria, Background to Nationalism, (California) 1958.

(2) Annual Report: Bornu Province 1909. In the Provincial Office, Maiduguri, Bornu Province, Nigeria.

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648 643 Data on how this was accomplished were not available in the public records of Bornu province. Therefore it can only be assumed (provisionally, until more information becomes available) that the British promise to rebuild Kuka, the old 19th century capital, must have appealed to the Shehu, and/or the French conceded to British demands for the Shehu to be brought to Bornu. Certainly since Britain had claim to Bornu as part of Nigeria from the days of the Chartered Companies (late 19th century), and was making good the claim, it was only logical from their viewpoint that the traditional ruler of Bornu should be allowed to sit on the throne
175 648 in the area historically connected with his reign. Taking the evidence of the French defeat of Rabeh, and their entry into Bornu with an armed force to defeat and kill his son, plus their establishment of the Shehu, it would seem as if the French from east of Lake Chad were trying to limit British expansion into Bornu by a fait accompli of possession, even though the western Chad basin had been ceded to England in the councils of European diplomacy.(1) In any event, all this manoeuvring on the part of the French proved of no avail, for it had also been decided in Europe that the Cameroons were to be administered by Germany, and the French soon had to cede even the area south of Lake Chad to that country.

175 648 634 "The first important step by the new British overlords was the sending out of the fiefholders to live in their fief-ships in 1903 ... These fiefs afterwards evolved into Districts and the most suitable men available were put in charge of them, the Shehu always being consulted (631) in the selection. These men are now Ajia or District Headmen. This formed a chain of responsibility in the administration which the size of the Emirate and its small European staff immediately demanded."(2) However

(1) Langer, W.L. The Diplomacy of Imperialism,(New York) p. 131
(2) Annual Report 1909; op. cit.

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643 before the fiefs developed into Districts it was discovered that a division of interests was involved between the British authorities and the Shehu. The British were motivated by their own ideas of administration, i.e. to form "a chain of responsibility" from the local level up through the Shehu to the Resident, while the Shehu evidently tried to have as many fiefs created as possible in order that there would be a multitude of District Heads, thereby increasing the number of offices with which he could reward his supporters. The matter was settled by the British who limited the number of districts to a compromise between what they believed to be the traditional structure, and what they considered to be a workable arrangement in terms of their own requirements of administering the Emirate.

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632 When the District Head arrived in his District with his retinue of supporters he found that the local Village Headmen (the Lawan), who were strange to him, were being supported by the British because of their hereditary claims to village leadership. The British soon discovered that it had been the policy of the traditional fief-holder "to supplant the hereditary headmen by slaves (or followers) of the China."(1) Nevertheless, when a new fief-holder took office they conducted investigations to find who were the pre-British (and usually pre-Rabeh) Village Headmen and proceeded to appoint these people as Village Heads. In following this policy a political structure was created which utilised two potentially conflicting principles of social organization. In appointing District Heads the personal relationships of upper class leaders to the Shehu was considered to be the acceptable criteria, while the hereditary claims of local leaders were considered to be the basis for Village Headships. Thus,

(1) Patterson, J.R. Report on Maguseri District 1920; in Maguseri District Notebook; Provincial Office, Maiduguri, Bornu Prov. Nigeria.

175 648 634 632 the new District Head going out to his district was confronted with a situation in which he had a territory comprising a group of villages which were to be under his organized administration, and which were at the same time headed by people with whom he had no personal relationships.

Entering into this situation, the District Head responded in several ways. He could try to win the loyalty of the local Village Heads to himself, or conversely some Village Heads, sensing danger in the new situation, might come to the District Head and ask to be "his man." This meant that the District Head had expanded his following to include the Village Head. However, there were obstacles to this simple method of rapprochement. If the Village Head already had a strong functioning relationship to some other "big man" in the Kanuri state who was a powerful person in the post-1900 organization, or if the District Head was anxious to reward his own supporters with lucrative and prestige giving roles, 175 then this method was not too successful. The District Head could also 648 try to manipulate the situation so that the Village Heads who he found 634 the most truculent in accepting his overlordship, were regarded as inef- 632 ficient, corrupt, or immoral in the eyes of the British, so that they 661 would be deposed and then he could replace them with recruits from among his own following. Thus, in 1919, a British District Officer (D.O.) visiting Magumeri District, was told by Abba Kiari, then District Head of Magumeri, that two of the Village Heads in his District were inefficient and should be deposed. He felt also that because of the proximity of the two towns they should be united under one Village Head, and he offered one of his own followers as the logical candidate for the new appointment.(1) Finally, the District Head could simply carry on as if the British were

(1) Whitely: Report on Magumeri 1919; in Magumeri District Notebook

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661 not present and appoint chima gana to live in each village of the District, who would collect taxes, levy fines, and hold judicial hearings, i.e. act as Village Headmen even though incumbents for these roles had already been appointed by the British. This led to an order by the Resident of Bornu in 1910 to the effect that no District Head could station his men in any of the towns of his District with the exception of his own headquarters. However, the provincial records indicate that the chima problem plagued the administration right up until the 1930's.

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631 Besides the structural difficulties which resulted in the political organization from the colonial contact, a major functional problem emerged in the area of taxation. By 1904 a tax collection system based on assessments made from rough estimates was instituted. Each village was assessed as a whole and the money turned into the Government (at first the Resident, later the Native Authority Treasury) through the District Head of each district. However, the Kanuri pre-British concept of taxation persisted long after British attempts to introduce their own concepts. The British attempted to introduce the idea that the District Head and the Village Heads under him were political functionaries or agents whose task it was to collect taxes, and not levy them as well.

[178] Although well known, this idea has not really ever been transferred from British culture to Kanuri ideas on tax collection and, as we shall see, what amounts to tax levies by local officials in excess of government requirements is almost a universal practice in Bornu today.

[166] The British soon found that "extortion" was being used to collect taxes. Discoveries were made by touring D.O.'s of peasants who would complain of excess taxation, or Village Heads whose prerogatives were being usurped by a chima, or in extreme cases by the emigration of peasants

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out of a very highly taxed District.(1) The net result was a high turn over in chiefs both at the District and village level, through the utilisation by the British of their powers of deposition of chiefs, and a continuation of Kanuri rather than British concepts of taxation.

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In 1914, a new Resident took over the province and began to strengthen the Emirate political structure at its center.(2) He instituted a Shehu's council with a Wasiri as its head, and issued instructions that no European officer was to give direct instructions to District Heads. All directives were to be made through the Shehu and his council. This council, starting originally with two members, grew steadily in size and function. By the late 1940's it resembled a kind of local cabinet with the Wasiri as its head under the titular headship of the Shehu and with each member having at least one portfolio. That is to say, the members of this Council have come more and more to function as the heads of civil service departments.

All African political organisation, both traditional and introduced, was called the Native Administration by Lugard and his followers and the Emirate departments of works, forestry, education, veterinary services, etc., were dubbed the N.A. departments, for that particular Emirate. This distinguished them from the government provincial departments who administered and guided the policies and actions of all the N.A.'s in the province.

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The newly introduced European governmental services demanded some degree of western education and trained clerks from other parts of Nigeria were brought into Bornu to fill the host of small jobs which were necessary to a growing administration.

(1) In the Mobber, Geidam, Maguseri and Nganzai District Notebooks, notations have been made throughout the colonial period of complaints by peasants who reported that they had moved from one district to another because of excessive taxation.

(2) In 1914, the British swiftly and with little opposition took over the German Cameroons, half of which were ceded to them after the War.

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The European trade in Bornu, like that of many parts of West Africa, developed a distinctive quality which arose primarily as a result of the dearth of available excess capital at the local level which could be utilized for trade. For this reason competition among the European traders involved a strong competition in the financing of tradersas well as the more usual aspects of commerce, like price, quality and sole distributorships. Although the major part of this competition went on between Europeans for the Arab speaking traders it also served as a stimulus in expanding the number of traders in the native population.

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The other relatively distinctive feature of the Bornu trade was the small number of Companies which participated in it at the European level. By the early 1920's almost the entire trade of Bornu to and from western Europe was handled by five or six large firms. Bauer has shown how this paucity was not only a commercial development but was encouraged by government who found it easier to deal with a few well established firms rather than a number of small ones. (1)

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The outside influences coming into Bornu after 1900 were thus of a two pronged variety which set up various responses in the political and economic spheres of local life. Up until the second world war, the main concern of the colonial official was to make the policy of indirect rule work, while always trying to force a more comprehensive understanding and conformity to the general values and standards of English culture. The theme for all annual reports running from circa 1914 to circa 1944 can be best expressed in the oft repeated phrase "steady progress." Each year tax collections were a little better, a few more students were attending the provincial

(1) Bauer P.T. West African Trade: (Cambridge University Press) 1954, pp. 150-156.

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

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648 schools, a few more roads were built or improved and once in a while extended, local European trading Companies reported "steady progress" in business volume, living conditions in the province for European staff "steadily improved", medical facilities "steadily expanded" and so on. Certainly there always seemed to be a rather high turn over in chiefs, but this came to be part of the expected regularity of life in Bornu.

What in effect had occurred was an adjustment. The British administration had set up the organization of its indirect rule and the task of each new Resident Officer in Bornu was to implement Lord Lugard's policies to the best of his abilities. The general methods of resistance to the English administration were well known by both the Kanuri and the English and no jarring outside influence entered the scene to upset the gentlemanly tug-of-war which characterized the colonial contacts as a kind of game in which everyone knew the rules and the conditions of play, while the over-all techniques of the players did not change much through time.

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[127] How the "game" was played at the political level can be seen in the following example of the deposition of a chief, taken from the provincial records at Maiduguri, concerning the District Head of Mobber between 1929 and 1931.(1) Mobber District is in the extreme northeast of Bornu Emirate on the border between Nigeria and French West Africa. Its relative isolation from British surveillance contributed to the maintenance of officially prohibited practices well into the late 1920's.

During 1929, a touring officer (British) reported that

(1) c.f. Mobber District File; Provincial Office, Maiduguri.

175 648 634 632 During 1929, a touring officer (British) reported that there were indications of widespread "extortion" of the peasants of Mobber District by the District Head and his chimas. In May of 1930, Mr. Reed, an A.D.O., was sent up to Mobber to investigate the situation. He reported that the District Head had stationed his chimas in many of the towns of the District. These subalterns were exercising judicial authority, administering whippings and raising levies for themselves and the District Head. The latter when questioned admitted that he was operating through chimas but complained that the Lawans (traditional Village Heads) were for the most part hostile to him. Mr. Reed told the District Head to abolish the chima system and tour himself. The District Head pleaded that he needed to have his own followers in the outer towns of his District to maintain order. The A.D.O. agreed and said he would return in about a month's time to see if the reforms had been carried out. On the return of Mr. Reed in June the situation had not changed appreciably and the A.D.O. arrested five of the most complained against chimas (by the villagers and Village Heads of the "chima's town") and took them to Maiduguri for hearings on the matter.

175 648 634 643 692 On July 7th, 1930, the Shehu, during an interview with the Resident, mentioned that the District Head of Mobber had requested the removal of the Mobber District judge on the grounds of ignorance and inefficiency. Upon questioning, the Shehu advanced the opinion that this request might be due to bad feeling between the District Head and the Alkali (judge). In his turn, the Resident opined that it might more particularly be the case that the judge disapproved of the District Head's illegal use of chimas and raising of personal tax levies.

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In another meeting between the Shehu and the Resident later that month, the Mobber matter was brought up again and the Shehu agreed that things did not seem to be going too well in Mobber. On the 14th of August, the Shehu suggested to the Resident when the Mobber misdemeanours were mentioned that the Mobber peasants were an extremely difficult group to manage and possibly chimas might be required for the proper administration of the District. At the end of August the Shehu requested of the Resident that the five men who had been arrested by A.D.O. Reed be sent back to their homes. The Resident agreed in principle, but felt that the one who had beaten a villager should be kept in Maiduguri for a little longer yet. He added that the men could be sent back to their homes only if the Shehu would take full responsibility for any further trouble in the Mobber area.

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In September and again in October of 1930, A.D.O. Reed was sent up to check the situation in Mobber District. The chimas were operating as before and the District Head was reported as being "not respectful" to the British officer on tour. Only one change [632] had occurred. An entire village area appeared to have been relinquished by the District Head since one of the Shehu's sons had been appointed its Lawan (Village Head) by the Wazirl.

Several months later in February 1931, the District Head of Mobber appeared in Maiduguri for an annual meeting and was warned by the Resident that "unless considerable improvement was shown he would be dismissed." From this point on, there were very few items in the Mobber District file in which the "Mobber case" was actually referred to. One short item tells of a rumour picked up by a junior officer to the effect that the District Head of Mobber was a favor-

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ite of the Shehu and was married to a daughter of the Wazziri (head of the Shehu's council). By the end of 1931 the matter began to congeal. The D. O. of Bornu Emirate wrote a note to the Resident claiming that the time had come to dispose of the District Head of Mobber since he obviously would not reform, and then suggested several names as replacements. In early 1932 the matter was mentioned briefly in a report to the Secretary of the Northern Provinces from the Resident of Bornu. It stated that "the Shehu and Council have found it necessary to depose the District Head of Mobber." Several people were nominated by the D. O. and by the Council for the replacement and the matter was closed when a man suggested by the Council was mentioned in reports as the new District Head of Mobber.

The British administrators had tried to persuade the District Head of Mobber for two years to stop using his own system of political organization and work through the Village Heads, i.e., the political structure recognized by themselves. His inability to comply finally brought about his removal. But the entire push and pull of the deposition did not materially disturb relations between the British and the political leadership of Bornu.

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Certainly the case hints at a well-organized Kanuri political system operating independently of the one formally recognized by the British. However, it also illustrates the formalized and balanced relationship which existed between the Resident and the Shehu. The Resident patiently tried to press forward with his own conception of government, while the Shehu was at the same time attempting to mollify English demands in order that the Emirate political organization could be maintained unmolested. The unsettling feature of the relations between the Kanuri and the English

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political organisation was the activities of the touring officer who might, by contacting local complaints, discover a necessity for reform which could bring British power into play in the Bornu political structure.

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This relatively stable accommodation of the 1930's revealed, by such examples as the Mobber case, has been upset by recent events in the post World War II period. The rapid rise in the price paid for groundnuts (the cash crop) from £3 to £11 per ton in 1946 caused the Resident to report "we are witnessing an economic change . . . possibly a revolution . . . for the farmer is now in command of a ready supply of cash . . . and for the first time the peasant has in his hands more money than he knows how to spend."(1) Again in 1947 he comments, "money is pouring into the hands of the people and there is nothing for them to spend it on . . . Money is available in great quantity for development but we can do little for want of staff and materials."(2) The post-war boom aided and abetted by the mustering out pay of the returning soldiers(3) had hit Bornu unprepared.

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In actual fact, there was not so much confusion on the part of the peasant over what to do with his new found wealth as there was on the part of the administration as to what to do with theirs. The trading companies quickly expanded both import and export facilities to meet the rapid increase in income and consumption. There is no indication of inability to spend money either in the published figures of Nigerian commerce, or in the memories of contemp-

(1) Annual Report Bornu Province; 1946
(2) Annual Report Bornu Province; 1947
(3) Pedler, F.J. A Study of Income and Expenditure in Northern Zaria; in Africa 18, 259-271, 1948.

178 49.
433 orary peasants whose only reaction to the boom was to plant cash
648 crops and buy more of the things that they always wanted to buy, especially around harvest time. However, the entire outlook and organization of the administration had been built up in the slow, "steady" years between the wars and now a "development" program was needed in order to plan for and dispense the large sums of money suddenly becoming available at the local level. Before long, new government buildings, schools, medical dispensaries and local N.A. [511] salaries were going up. In Maiduguri, bicycles, radios, tin roofs on houses, motor cars and trucks began to be common sights and needs.

178 On the national scene, Nigerian independence was a new
619 wind blowing up from the south that eventually came to Bornu and
648 brought her leaders into closer contact with the emerging political parties of Nigeria. Radios and ease of travel, even to those well out in the "bush", brought the people of Bornu into closer contact not only with the rest of Bornu, but into a growing unity of sentiments and even language and culture with the entire Muslim population of Northern Nigeria. Since 1950 a movie theater in Maiduguri 177 has brought the American cowboy as well as an immediate perception of many other aspects of American and European life into the heart of Bornu, so that to many of the people there we in North America are not as strange to them as they and their culture are to us.

605 play with his patrilateral cousins. As in the matrilateral case, if ego changes his joking-wife, the tiu joking relationships shift also in association with the change. That is to say, these joking relationships may change in their personnel from time to time, but are ordered in relation to the adult marriage rules in each separate situation.

[184] Although no attempt was made to measure class differences in the cousin joking relationships, it should be noted here that several informants claimed that the above joking relations were "unbecoming" for good proper behaviour and they did not practise such customs.

567 Outside the kinship system a joking relationship may hold between a master and his slave, although this is usual only when the slave is an entertainer of some kind. Informants denied that it occurred when the slave is merely serving his master in an ordinary work situation. Amongst the various occupations, joking
571 463 relations obtain between smiths and butchers; barber-doctors and smiths; mallams (koranic teacher-priests) and hunters; kola-nut wholesalers and retailers; dyers and tailors; a builder of mud houses and his labourers; a fire-wood seller and his customers;
614 • 648 pepper sellers and kola-nut wholesalers. Joking relations also hold between clans such as Ngala'a and Magumi; Nguma and Tàra; Kuburi and Tàra; Su'urti and Kuburi; or between ethnic groups like Shuwa and Kanuri; Kurdi and Shuwa; Hausa and Fulani; Kanuri and Fulani; Tubu and Monga; Monga and Bädde; Kanembu and Wasili (Arabs).

571 602 In the above relationships which seem in all cases to cover an area of interrelations involving potential conflicts, the

582 For example, in 1930 the District Head of Mobber, who was in grave dan-
557 ger of being dismissed from his position by the British, contracted a marriage with a daughter of the Wazirl of Bornu.(1) This was his own way, the Kanuri way, of attempting to strengthen his waning political position in the State. He felt that a marriage link between himself and the household of the Wazirl would make it more difficult for the higher powers to dispose of him, and would enlist the aid of the Wazirl, the second most powerful man in the Kanuri political organization, on his
• [648] behalf. The British administration, however, did not take into account the feelings of fathers-in-law for sons-in-law(2) when judging political performance, and so the manoeuvre was in the end to no avail.

The nyia kam rukatabe can also refer to a marriage which is initiated purely for the sake of marrying a woman or a girl, whose attachment to ego will obviously profit him economically. She is often wealthy herself, or is a wealthy heiress. Thus a high ranking person was observed to spend a great deal of money (this might almost be termed an"investment") for a virgin girl who was the only heir of a rich old man of lower social rank to himself. Informants described this as a true nyia kam rukatabe (marriage with a rich man's girl).

582 By their very nature marriages of this variety are more com-
587 monly of the virgin type. However, young girls who divorce and return
557 to the households of their luwali, as tradition prescribes, very often
565 can be utilized for such marriages in their second or possibly even third unions. . Since high ranking women are more often in seclusion there is a greater probability that successive dispensations after div-

(1) See above; chap. III,
(2) The official records do not give the actual biological linkage of the girl to the Wazirl, and it is therefore impossible to tell what kind of a ward she was in the Wazirl's household.

554 602 [156] lower level. A high born, successful chief explained the improper, disreputable behaviour of another chief by claiming that this sort of thing was not surprising behaviour from the son of a slave. At the peasant level, birth status can count as well in raising or lowering an individual in the eyes of his fellows. A man is given higher status because his father is rich or is a powerful Koranic mallam, while it may be whispered of another that his mother was a pagan, or his father was a blacksmith, thus lowering his status in the eyes of others.

565 602 554 As in most complex stratified societies, birth in Bornu into any one level determines to a large measure what range up or down of status positions an individual is likely to achieve in his lifetime.(1) There is a much higher chance that high status positions are occupied by the sons of high status persons rather than the sons of peasants. [178] Western education and the plethora of jobs opening up is latterly creating [648] a more widely mobile society, but it was British policy at the beginning of the colonial period to educate the sons of chiefs. The advantages of this policy were soon perceived by the leaders of the society. [271] Consequently, a large proportion of the young western educated group are [369] sons of the traditional political leaders. There is no conflict over this tendency from the rural population, who still do not value western education very highly, although rumblings of resentment are heard in the large urban centre. 565 463 602 At the peasant level many of the craft workers in Maguneri, the potters, dyers, blacksmiths, calabash makers and the other craftsmen, are from kin groups that have engaged in these industries "duk" (right back through time), for as long as any of them can remember. However, except for the potters (females) and blacksmiths,

(1) cf. Lipsett, S.M. and Bendix, R., Social Mobility and Occupational Career, American Journal of Sociology Vol. LVII (March 1952) pp. 494-504.

Chapter VIII

Political Organization

631 The political organization in Bornu can be seen as a continuum of power and authority running from small to large scale structures. These include the extended household organization, the hamlet and ward, the village area, the district, and finally the state, which today has a place in the Northern Region and the Federation of Nigeria. [648] In Bornu, each expansion of the scale of the organization includes part or all of the previous one, while cross-cutting the entire system and intersecting it with varying intensities at different levels is the colonial administration.

621 ### The Hamlet and the Ward

Within the point of view of the present discussion the basic unit of political structure is the extended household organization [571] with its head as the primary governmental figure. The processes of fission and fusion by which these units expand or contract within themselves has already been described (see above pp. 80 - 92).

571 621 There is however a larger scaled process of fission and fusion which integrates that previously discussed with a wider political organization. This is the underlying process of Hamlet and Ward formation. The following examples illustrate this process in action.

[361] [632] Approximately three miles south-west of Magumeri is the small village of Gworongo (pop. circa 250) which falls within the [249] administrative jurisdiction of the town area of Magumeri. Surrounding [276] the town are small plots of a specialized crop (gworongo)[1] which is sold [302] in the local markets along with tobacco flowers as a stimulant and a cosmetic for colouring women's teeth. In 1953 one of these full-time

(1) Solanacea Incanum

632 if the matter is ratified by a person of authority in their community. Thus if a man in Magumeri town wishes to move his compound walls in order to expand the size of his dwelling space, he speaks to his ward head about it and they both go to the Lawan and speak to him of the decision. Lawan asks his men to find out if the contiguous neighbours object, and if not, the action is ratified. This supervisory function of political leaders, especially the Lawan, is a well used mechanism for avoiding possible conflicts in the interpersonal relations of people in town and village settlements.

632 651 The Lawan collects two kinds of taxes, although only one is officially recognized by the N.A. Firstly, there is a tax collected for the state from all settled people in the village area which is in the form of a property assessment on all males over the age of eighteen to twenty. Any amount the Lawan obtains with the aid of his organization above the amount written on the tax receipt stubs, is (illegally) [661] his own income. Overtaxing in this manner is a widely accepted prac- [648] tice, but must be kept within limits, since a complaint to the British by a resentful peasant could bring on the dismissal of the Lawan.

632 651 661 The second tax collected by the Lawan is the zakat or tithe on farm produce. Unlike the first tax, there is no official sanction for this levy beyond that of tradition, and the power and authority of [648] the Lawan in his Village Area. Colonial officials assured the writer that this practice was illegal and occurred only sporadically. In a survey of 75 households in three Village Areas (i.e., under three different Lawans) all peasants who had produced a farm crop reported paying a tithe in kind or approximately ten per cent of their millet crop. In twelve cases the household heads declared that they had given ten per cent of all crop production including millet, beans and groundnuts.

634 647 662 one, before he was re-stationed to the capital city by the N.A. He (1) had arrived several years ago in Magumeri as the jail keeper and the DH had given him a place to live within the walls of his own residence. In consequence almost all of the jailer's friendships and social relations were with people of the DH's extended household organization. This created a gap between the jailer and the other N.A. officials who felt that he was not completely trustworthy as a confidential friend, since gossip and criticism of the DH - a common topic of conversation - might be dangerous in his presence. Finally in 1955, the DH gave the jailer a young virgin of his household over whom he had marriage dispensation rights. This tied the relationship much tighter, and had the jailer stayed on in Magumeri, he would have been one of the few N.A. officials whom the DH could count on for subservient behaviour.

The D.H.'s Relations to the Center

631 634 642 The formal and informal links of the DH to the capital are extremely complex and are only treated here in summary form. (2)

Formally the DH is responsible to only one body in the political organization of Bornu, viz. the Shehu-in-Council. This body under the chairmanship of the Waziri (the Chief Councillor) decides on the policies of the State, draws up the annual budget, heads up the various departments of the N.A., acts as a court in trying cases of N.A.

[648] (1) This move was not due to machinations in the N.A. A new, young British officer was at the time zealously working on the Bornu prison system and felt that more warders were needed in Maiduguri, which soon became the accepted policy. In the colonial service of Northern Nigeria, shifts and changes of various kinds can be labelled "improvements" in Reports, and the young officer receives some merit for his conscientiousness. C.f. the picture given by Joyce Cary, in his novel Mr. Johnson, of the British officers in Northern Nigeria, each with his own peculiar "improvement" enthusiasm.

[114] (2) A separate study of these relations is being prepared in collaboration with Prof. A. G. Frank, comparing the role of the DH with that of the Russian industrial manager.

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642 personnel, and ratifies all appointments, dismissals and transfers of the N.A. The DH may be informed of directives either from the Wazirí's office or from the relevant Department which would also inform their local District personnel.

• 648 Officially, today, the British personnel both technical and administrative, perform an advisory, not an authoritative, part in the political organization. Although much of the "advice" is given at the center, there is some contact between the colonial service officials and the District during the touring duty of the officers. Such visits are always publicized beforehand to the local officials and the British officer is always accompanied by a Shehu's Representative. Technical officers are generally concerned with their own particular program in the area and unless they feel that the local authorities are being uncooperative, they do not interfere in local or State politics. The administrative officers have a much wider range of interests which covers all areas of government not directly under the concern of some technical department, i.e. taxation, courts of law, District Councils (local government) and complaints by the peasants against their chiefs. Some also take an interest in one or more technical branch and report their findings to the relevant department after their touring duties have brought them into contact with local programs.

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203 Informally the DH has a house in the palace ward in the capital and his followers there are links between himself and the
[631] center. The Wakil (chief follower) in charge of the town house visits the Shehu regularly and represents the DH in the capital. Besides this source of contact with the center, the DH receives information from N.A. messengers, policeman and traders who travel continually from Maiduguri through the Districts. By the judicious giving of gifts to

634 By the judicious giving of gifts to
203 these travellers when they come to pay their respects in the District
[431] capital, the DH can build up a large communication network through which he obtains a many-sided picture of events in the capital.(1) Fin-
634 ally the DH is linked to a faction in the Bornu state which has its most
665 powerful leaders in the capital. Traditionally these factions emerged
662 from the allegiance of nobles to the various agnatic lineage segments
[571] of the royal family. These remain today but are now joined by factions representing some of the heads of the modern civil service. DH's linked to more powerful factions receive better information and more protection than those joined to weak ones. Thus the DH of Magumeri who had inherited a factional membership from his father which linked him to an effete second son of a former Shehu received much less support than another DH who was linked to the faction headed by the present Waziri
[203] (head of the Shehu's council and the N.A.). Because of the constant contact of the Waziri with all of the agencies of government including the British, the second DH had a much more intimate knowledge of the workings of Emirate politics at the center.

634 These informal links become important when it is realised
662 that the DH works under a system of conflicting standards all of which
• 648 can be enforced. Thus a DH must give large gifts periodically to his faction leaders, to the Shehu, and to many other persons throughout the state. The British see these as bribes, the Kanuri regard them as legitimate and obligatory. Since such expenses are not envisaged in a DH's salary he is forced to obtain the money illegally (according to
634 British standards). Again, the DH's success in obtaining tax receipts
651 is of major importance. One British officer told the writer that he did

(1) See the discussion above on nona and bɔrsum for the dynamics of interpersonal relations involved in "paying respects", pp.57-68.

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651 not care what the causes were for a consistent drop in tax receipts, the very fact of diminution indicated an inadequate District organization. In order to obtain the nomad cattle tax the DH must have a large group of horsed followers whom he keeps in food, clothing and all other expenses. If he does not maintain this large organization he cannot collect the taxes; if he does then he must embezzle (by British standards) tax receipts in order to do so.

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631 Furthermore, as in any bureaucracy, standards and their
• 648 enforcement change through time in their emphasis, often as a result of changing personnel at the top. A new N.A. councillor became interested in school latrines, and started punishing recalcitrant DH's for not maintaining adequate toilet facilities in the District school. A British officer interested in roads was replaced by one interested in prisons and so on. These conflicts in standards and changes in emphasis bring punishments in the form of dismissals, transfers to poorer paying Districts and even jail sentences - and all this emanates from the capital. The informal links between the DH and the center help him to predict the course of policy and prepare for any changes in enforcement of the conflicting standards under which he has to operate.

The Organization at the Center

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[368] In Maiduguri at the eastern end of the royal plaza is the palace of the Shehu, the focal point of Bornu political organization.
[101] As a language and a culture Kanuri transcends its state boundaries, but within its organized bounds, the Shehu is the formal head of state. All measures, policies and appointments made by the central agencies are done in the name of the Shehu. Officially he installs office holders from the rank of Lawan up, at an investiture of "turbaning" ceremony which publicly proclaims the person's right to office. The Shehu is

643 lower rank, that the Shehu had a good deal to say in the appointment of new DH's, and could operate as a bulwark to protect office holders whose connection to the palace and/or Bornu tradition made them feel some reliance on the monarch's protection.

643 648 [114] That this interpretation is open to the charge of ethnocentricism the writer is keenly aware, for it is the avowed British policy to create in Bornu a constitutional monarchy of the English variety, while making the Wazirl and the rest of the Council the effective administration of the state. Thus the interpretation is in line with European policy. Perhaps the power situation only looks this way and is in [829] reality quite different. This much can be said: high placed Bornu officials agreed with this trend and for rational reasons. They argued that the state functions were becoming extremely complicated, and that only trained, worldly men, who understood not only Bornu, but Bornu in relation to Nigeria, could adequately do the job. The British, however, are inconsistent in their policy, for they feel very strongly about having somebody who can speak English as the next Shehu, while the Kanuri leaders want a particular well loved older man who is known for his view of the monarchy as a ceremonial rather than an authoritative role. If the present Shehu dies (he is 85) before the British leave, the Kanuri may find themselves with a younger, more ambitious Shehu, who will attempt to affect the running of the state.(1)

645 647 Bornu Emirate besides having traditional chiefs also has the formal structure of a western civil service. Under the Shehu's Councillors are the various N.A. departments. Under the chairmanship of the Wazirl, each Councillor is responsible for one of the N.A. departments whose titles - forestry, sanitation, agriculture, education, public

(1) The British have the power of veto on appointments, so that although the Kanuri may put up names, the British can, by using this

[Footnote continues on p. 258]

645 works, etc., - are distinctly western. The Councillors work under the
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[631] advice of the Provincial Government Department, i.e. the Colonial government, whose top personnel are Europeans.

647 The personnel in the N.A. departments form what has come to
571 be called a new class in the society - the new mallams. They wear wrist watches, read vernacular newspapers, listen avidly to the radio, go to political meetings, join civil service associations, and think of themselves as urban, even when they are stationed in the buah. For the most part they have obtained their jobs as a result of some exposure to western education. The separateness of this "class" from the traditional society is often claimed by British officials some of whom see in this group the foundation of a new ruling elite whose membership will be
[555] based on western education and outlook. That western education is a new means of upward mobility is undeniable, but the separateness of the new mallams in the N.A. departments from their traditional society and its values is open to doubt. This point can be illustrated by looking at some of the informal rather than formal rules of behaviour operating in the N.A.

647 Recruitment into the N.A. can be by application to the Shehu's Council or the relevant Department, in writing. No informants in
[873] the N.A. had heard of this method ever being used. Another way of recruiting personnel is to obtain the new civil servants from among the Secondary School boys of Maiduguri. Teachers in the Secondary School
[557] remark that this method is being used more often as time goes on. However, the most often utilized method of recruitment to the N.A. is a

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643 power, make the final decision if they wish. Stalemates are settled by
648 the Governor of the Northern Region. The Resident officer of Bornu was adamant in his opposition to the Kanuri's own choice for Shehu-elect in his conversations with the writer on this topic.

665 641 [186] it is well known encourage women to join their organization and come to its meetings just like men. Finally it is always pointed out that the opposition is linked to the southern Ibo party, and that a vote for such a group, even though the local members profess Islam, is a vote against religion, and for the despised pagans.

665 647 In the N.A. it is an unwritten law that everyone should support the N.P.C., or at least not actively oppose it. Without exception, all informants in the N.A. felt that they would lose their jobs if they were to give even a hint of support to the opposition party. It is furthermore believed that the British favour the N.P.C. and discriminate [648] against the opposition party. This view is corroborated for people by some of the British administrative officers who, because of their long association with the N.A. and the traditional power groups, are easily convinced by the N.A. officials that the opposition party is composed of malcontents and agitators who may cause trouble, the anathema of the colonial service. The result of all this is a feeling of suppression among many of the younger N.A. members, who pay lip service to the N.P.C. but secretly report their support of the opposition party.

665 This opposition party, originally the Bornu Youth League, now a part of the N.E.P.U. (Northern Elements Progressive Union),(1) is headed by a renegade Bornu aristocrat, who has a genuine desire to reform his country. The party is supported by Ibos, dissidents, and acculturated young people who feel that reforms are necessary in the political system. In the party organization itself are many Kanuri who are behaving in a traditional manner. They consider themselves the extended household organization of the party leader. Several of them re-

(1) This party is linked to the party of Dr. Azikwe in the Eastern Region.

442 out for some new supplier relations since he has recently lost money
571 for Alkali Bukar (1) and the latter, kinship notwithstanding, has been reluctant to continue his financing. Without being asked, Ajimi referred to the possibility of relationships in the future with non-kin backers to meet his need for a mai gida.

(d) Alkali Bukar

441 Alkali Bukar who up until summer of 1957, had been financing
452 Ajimi, was at one time the Alkali of Kagumeri and still owns a choice
[423] farm plot there which his son plants and harvests for him with the aid
[648] of labourers. When he was dismissed from his judicial post several years ago by the British he went into trade using his house in Maiduguri as his headquarters.

441 He gives out money to people like Ajimi to trade with and
452 takes a share of the profits. Some of these subordinates are kin rela-
571 tions, most are not. Those who are not consanguinal kin start out in his household as tada njima where they carry water, cut grass for the for the horses, run messages and so on. For this they receive their food, shelter, clothing and a little spending money. If over a period of one to two years they prove trustworthy the Alkali gives them some
441 money for trade. During 1956-57 he engaged in the following ventures
438 in Bornu:

(1) Several (two or three) "boys" bought millet in Geidam for sale in Maiduguri.

(2) One "boy" sold cloth (obtained by the Alkali) in Damasac, as well as onions, which the subordinate obtained himself with the Alkali's money.

[684] (1) Ajimi has a penchant for adultery and has had to pay several large fines recently, the money for which he obtained from his trading receipts.

441 and trade in many commodities. Secondly, the European companies have
452 always dealt in all items of export and import, and have encouraged and
• [648] even forced, at times, (through conditional sales) their trade contacts to deal in more than one item.

441 However, the process of specialization is always latently
178 present, requiring only proper stimulation to emerge in the face of the traditional process of organizing relationships in the pattern of an
441 extended Kanuri household. This has happened in the case of a Maiduguri
439 trader, Alhaji Jibrim, who is a partner in a crocodile skin exporting
281 business with a European. The European, whose brothers collect skins in four or five other African countries, feels that with self-government coming shortly to Nigeria, his business interests will best be served in the future if his Nigerian branch has an African partner. Alhaji has a score of tada njima who go to the bush with cash and contact other middlemen who have obtained the crocodile skins from the hunters. The tada njima then bring the skins to Maiduguri, where they are prepared by Alhaji and his European partner for air transport to Paris, London and New York.

441 Few Bornu traders are as specialized as Alhaji Jibrim. The typical trader takes goods and cash from wherever he can and passes these on to the subordinates in his organization, his tada njima, who then trade with local wholesalers or retailers.

441 Intermeshed with Kanuri trade and acting as an export/import
439 filter through which most large scale trade passes in and out of Bornu
563 are the Levantine and European trading establishments.

The Levantines are small business men who understand western commercial techniques and are willing to deal in small quantities to many outlets. Thus a large proportion obtain goods and credit from the

[p 329]

Chapter X

Summary and Conclusions

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The description of pre-Colonial Bornu has indicated that despite the rise and fall of its fortune the Kanuri political organization has had a remarkable resiliency throughout the last millenium. As long as the system of feudal organization remained with its nucleus at the capital city and court of the monarch, then the rise and fall of the empire was not fatal to its continuity. Kanuri feudalism is a segmentary corporate political structure; while the top remains intact, the expansion and contraction of the State itself bears no relation to its survival.

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The traditional background from which the present society obtains its roots has been altered in this century by contact with British colonialism. In Northern Nigeria the administration was deeply affected by the views of its founder Lugard, whose own control of the organization of the regional colonial service ensured that many of its norms, procedures and its overall policy would be an embodiment of his personal philosophy of colonialism. In Bornu, this meant that the pre-Rabeh Kanuri leaders regained their old positions, the Shehu was placed at the head of the State (now called the Bornu Emirate), and the fief-holders now called District Heads or Ajias, went to live in "bush" on their respective fiefs. The Village Heads within each district were appointed because of hereditary claims to the position while the District Heads over them were chosen because of their relationship to the monarch and/or other powerful groups at the capital. This set up possible conflicts between DH's and the Village Heads in their districts

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which has lasted to the present day. The policy of the British was to rule through and strengthen the authority of the native leaders, while

175 enforcing compliance with the "fundamental laws of humanity" (which
• 648 ruled out the slave trade). The European and the African were to co-
642 operate in administering the country but live separate lives socially,
[563] while western ideas and technology were to be introduced slowly when and if they would be acceptable, and only when capable of being financed on local revenues.

175 Out of this organization there grew a readily identifiable
648 English sub-culture whose uniqueness was a product of its particular
563 English upper class background and its adjustment to the common stimulus of Northern Nigeria. Their standards of administrative judgment came from Lugard and their common origins in English society; their hopes and fears, frustrations and satisfactions, grew out of the common work situation to be found in the British administration of the northern Emirates.

Because of the dearth of trained local personnel for carrying on the day to day office work and record-keeping of administration, the southern Nigerian, predominantly the Ibo, was introduced to Bornu. They soon came as skilled and semi-skilled labourers, carpenters, builders, bricklayers, mechanics and traders, and so in Bornu a minority group of southerners, mostly Christian, and more acculturated to Western ways became an established, although separate, part of the society.

175 After the inception of colonial rule the interaction be-
648 tween the British administration and the native political organization soon settled into a fairly steady pattern in which the British pushed continually for conformity to their own values in political organisation, education, taxation, trade, etc. The Bornu officials and others who contacted the British, in their response, maintained as much of Kanuri culture as they could while at the same time learning what to

175 expect from the Europeans whose consistency was an expression of the
• 648 British sub-cultural unity. This balance was upset by the second world war, whose post-war boom and the Nigerian independence movement wrought rapid changes in the contemporary scene in Bornu.

177 At the peasant level, changes have not been cataclysmic. The
178 ending of the slave trade and the pacification of the country from constant wars, especially the remembered ravages of Rabeh, are frequently referred to by the peasants as the most valued changes which have been [433] instituted since the coming of the British. However, from an analytical point of view, the universal spread of a cash economy and the production of cash crops to all levels of the peasant society during the last fifty years is a significant development of no less importance than the conscious value placed upon the pacification. With minor exceptions the arrival of the European has not changed the social relations between the peasant and his fellows, and between the peasant and the [494] chiefs. The development of roads, and the coming of the "lorries" allowed for more mobility, and has slowly expanded the possibilities of settlement for the Kanuri peasant to include not only all of Bornu, but the entire Northern Region, at least for the more adventurous. However, house types, methods of farming, law, religion, local social organization, and most importantly basic values, have continued in the time honoured manner of the past.

177 The introduction of the few European trading houses has
441 served as a stimulus of profound and continuing effect in the total Bornu society. It has brought the Arab-speaking middlemen who absorb a large proportion of available credit, which the Companies use as a primary item of competition due to the lack of local capital for investment in the area. The trade, and its outside capital, has intro-

177 441 duced new wants in consumer goods, and encouraged the spread of cash cropping and native middlemen to fill roles as distributors of western products, and as buyers of cash crops at the village level.

178 • 648 642 However, the Bornu Emirate under the British was not the same article as its 19th century predecessor. Its boundaries were now permanently delimited and required no great responsibility on the part of the local people to defend or expand. The military power of the Shehu and control of "foreign affairs" with other Sudanic military powers had now been taken over by the British, who performed these functions in accordance with the imperial policies of the colonial government of England. Indeed the need for militarism all but vanished since the Bornu political organization and territory were now dependent upon the position and policy of Great Britain in world affairs.

The policies of indirect rule created a climate of control wherein the previous cultural life could continue; however, because of the intrusion of the British administration into the top of the society as a controlling caste who were supposed to rule through local authorities, there occurred a potential weakening of the indigenous political [182] organization. Although a high degree of integration of law, religion and social organization remained, and all functioned to support authority, there were no other authorities at the top of Kanuri society. Unlike the authorities in the traditional society, the British had different values and goals. Because both traditional standards of performance and goals and the new ones are both enforceable, new conflicts have become possible in the contemporary society, especially in the political sphere.

602 571 In order to place kinship in a larger social context, behaviour associated with kinship has been categorized under four somewhat

621 571 in households contiguous to their superiors. The Kanuri have no name for this constant and fundamental organisation in their society. However it is a major conclusion of this study that the organisational characteristics of what we have here labelled the extended household organisation is the basic link between the structure of local, small scaled social interactions and the wider scaled political and economic organization of the Emirate.

631 571 The Emirate as a whole is segmentary and hierarchical structure of authority running from the Shehu-in-Council down to the lowly peasant compound. For such a system to work most efficiently there should be a pyramidal system of control from one final power through followers, to followers of followers and so on. This makes each man in the state link up hierarchically and personally to the man above him. Any conflicts between segments can be minimised and controlled if all members of the system are sensitive to the power at the top of the structure. In the language of the present discussion lower level members are (ideally) subordinates in the extended household organization of the next higher level in the political structure.

631 642 In practice there are factors present which make it impossible for the Kanuri political organization to be a simple hierarchy of authority so that each man looks to the man above him in the structure. For power and potential power in the future is segmented at the center of the State among the agnatic lineage members of the royal family and the top leaders of N.A. Thus the lower echelons of the political pyramid are lined up, not behind a unitary repository [648] of power at the center, but many. The power of the British tends even more to break up any possible unity which might occur at the top of the political organization, and tends besides to create ambiguous

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648 and conflicting standards of performance for incumbents of political roles.

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665 The results of this complexity leads to large factions each under one of the segments of power at the center of the State. Or again in the terminology adapted here - there are large extended household organizations beginning at the center of the State and incorporating in their control all DH's and Lawans (and through the Lawans, all Wards, Hamlets and compounds). Traditionally the ruler kept faction leaders close to his capital and could replace them at any time by followers, slaves or eunuchs. The ruler's subordinates made sure that the line of authority between themselves and their fief and its subjects was a loyal one. Only upon the death of a ruler was there much danger of factional disputes disrupting the political organization of the State.

[179] Today this system is in difficulty because the factional segments are not under the control of any one source of power. Because of the shifts in personnel and in personal fortunes due to conflicts with British standards, and new avenues of political success (the N.A.) at the center, the segments cross-cut one another. Thus a Lawan who is a loyal follower of a DH in district X finds himself in district Y under another DH. Or a DH finds that he has N.A. personnel from the capital in his district who are connected to political segments beyond his control.

Integrative organizational tendencies tend to offset some of the present difficulties. We have seen how DH's try to incorporate Lawans into their own organization or, if this is not possible, the DH attempts to replace them with trustworthy followers. Informal communication channels are developed so that forecasts of changes in